

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Calgary youth deliver everlasting gift... p. 13

Human cloning debated on campus p. 15



56th year of publication

Canadian young people help build Mexican orphanage

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Gordon Legge

QUERETARO, Mexico — In 1978, Darrell Hilbrands was in a motorcycle accident that left him a paraplegic.

Today the son of an American Christian Reformed pastor maneuvers his wheelchair around a Mexican orphanage like a player on a basketball court, tending to the needs of more than 80 children.

Hilbrands, 52, together with his wife, Elena, run Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) Ministries in Queretaro in Central Mexico.

In December, a group of more than 60 Canadians visited the orphanage as part of a program called Youth Beyond Borders sponsored by Samaritan's Purse.

A total of 49 young people and 13 adults from across Canada spent a week in Mexico distributing shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child, along with hu-

manitarian assistance, to the Otomi indigenous people living in the region surrounding Queretaro.

A venture of faith

During their visit, the young people, aged 16 to 22, spent a day playing with the children at Pan de Vida and working on the first phase of a new orphanage — "a venture of faith" — being constructed on the edge of the city.

"Our home was founded with the intention of rescuing persons who would not normally have the opportunity to achieve a productive and valuable life in society," says Hilbrands, whom everyone refers to affectionately as "Dario".

At Pan de Vida, they provide shelter, meals and 24-hour care for children aged two to 18 who were abandoned or victims of both physical and emotional abuse.

In a country where it's estimated there are two million street

children, government authorities credit Pan de Vida with remarkable success.

Some days, the orphanage is like "zoo city", says Hilbrands. That's one of the reasons why the Hilbrands dream of constructing a \$1.6 million orphanage on the outskirts of Queretaro, located about three hours drive north of Mexico City.

The first building, a boy's dormitory, is currently under construction in what they hope will eventually be a compound comprising 11 buildings on the outskirts of the city.

Living off donations from a few churches and some individuals, Pan de Vida began receiving some additional monthly support last year from the Calgary office of Samaritan's Purse, a Christian International Relief organization headed up by Franklin Graham.

See COUPLE page 2...

CHRISTIAN COURIER
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GORDON LEGGE

Darrell Hilbrands, director of the Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) orphanage in Queretaro, Mexico is shown here with Erica, 16, who has been at the orphanage for several years. They are shown at the construction site for a new orphanage that is slowly being built.

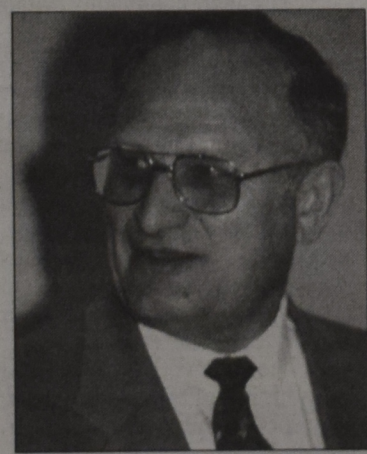
'Let justice flow' in Manitoba, urge church leaders

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — Because hydro development in northern Manitoba has caused some serious problems for the aboriginal people there, a group of Christian leaders recently conducted an interchurch inquiry and produced a report which calls for action to remedy those problems.

Rev. Arie Van Eek, who was executive director of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada between 1978 and 1998, was one of the inquiry's four commissioners, and a co-author of the report called *Let Justice Flow*. The report takes its name from Amos 5:24: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

Last June, these commissioners heard from concerned people in Winnipeg and the northern Manitoba town of Cross Lake. The resulting report is strongly critical of the authorities which led the hydro



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Rev. Arie Van Eek

development: Manitoba Hydro, and the Manitoban and Canadian governments.

Dismayed by testimonies

Van Eek says he was "dismayed" to hear the testimonies of natives who had their lives

disrupted by the development. "You are there for a while and you feel yourself going down," he observed. While visiting northern Manitoba, Van Eek stayed with a native family, and went with his colleagues to see the dams and the areas affected by them. The report "conveyed exactly what's going on: so much unemployment, so many suicides," asserts Van Eek.

Van Eek explains that he was invited to join the inquiry because in the 1970s, he had been pastoring a Christian Reformed church in Winnipeg, and helped to start up the Indian Family Centre there. After he moved to Ontario in the late '70s, he continued to be involved with native issues as part of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition.

Although Manitoba's northern hydro development began in the mid-1970s, strong negative effects such as flooding of aboriginal reserve land are still taking their toll on the area's people. So, in 1999 a

coalition of church leaders called the Manitoba Aboriginal Rights Coalition recognized the need to publicly revisit questions of fairness related to the Churchill-Nelson Hydroelectric Project (the Project), and they set up the inquiry.

"It is a tragic irony that the same region that supplies Manitoba with billions of dollars in hydro-electric wealth is also home to aboriginal peoples caught in a quagmire of poverty and social despair," asserts the report. The Project "has brought opportunity and prosperity to society at large, while bringing considerable environmental and cultural disruption to those living at its heart. The panel of inquiry commissioners sees the urgent need to move from a situation in which the Project is a source of problems for aboriginal peoples to a situation in which it is the source of solutions."

The report highlights environ-

mental and social damage which have resulted from the Project, and offers recommendations on how to improve the situation.

After-the-fact permission

One key problem the report points out is that the Crown parties "obtained an after-the-fact right to use the land" from several First Nations groups. Although most of the Project was up and running by 1976, the Northern Flood Agreement (NFA) was not prepared and signed by those groups until 1977. Even then, notes the report, two of the most severely affected communities were not included in the NFA. These people, "who live in the shadow of Manitoba's three largest dams, spoke of the invasion of their homeland, which was undertaken with almost complete disregard for their most basic rights."

Similarly, assert the report's writers, "substantive consultation

See CHURCH page 2...

News

Couple ministers to Mexican kids with heartbreaking stories

... continued from page 1

Hilbrands is the son of Christian Reformed pastor Jack Hilbrands who died in 1989. While Hilbrands grew up in a Christian home, it wasn't always his ambition to help destitute children.

In fact, when Hilbrands had his accident, he says, "I was running away from God. But through that experience I came to a personal realization of the need to give my new life over to God.

"It was trying," he remembers. "But I could always hold to my encounter with the living God when doubt or disillusion set in. Since that time, I've tried to serve God in the best way that I could."

That summer never ended

Hilbrands met his wife in Guadalajara while studying Spanish one summer. "That summer has never ended after more than 20 years," he says.

Hilbrands decided to stay in Mexico and the couple moved to Tijuana where they worked in an orphanage. There, Hilbrands, a secondary schoolteacher since graduating from university in 1971, and Elena, who studied child evangelism, started a Christian school.

In 1993, they moved to Queretaro and started Pan de Vida in 1994. They began with 12 children in loaned quarters. Three years later, as their numbers swelled, they moved to their current rented quarters.

The school continues with the



A group of Canadian young people spend part of a day working on the construction of a boy's dormitory for the Pan de Vida orphanage in Queretaro, Mexico.

help of several junior and senior high graduates in recent years, and others who have gone on to Bible school, nursing, social work and teaching.

Each child at the orphanage has a story and all of them are heartbreaking.

• Francisco, five, was brought to Mexico City from Acapulco by his mother. There he worked the streets while living in an abandoned car. His mother eventually abandoned him. But a gracious elderly woman picked him up, fed him and taught him how to read. Eventually, he ended up at Pan de Vida. Today he's finishing up his schooling in the U.S.

• A local overweight prostitute had trouble attracting clients. As an enticement, she offered them her daughter, Angela, 7. For an additional amount, the clients could do what they wanted with the defenseless girl while the drunken mother looked on. Eventually,

neighbors reported the woman to the authorities and the girl ended up at Pan de Vida. "The girl, now 16, has made peace with her God and has blossomed into a very extraordinary person," says Hilbrands.

• At age four, Maria was diagnosed with brain damage. She spoke no words, just grunted. Abandoned, she arrived at Pan de Vida where she spent hours contemplating her finger tips. But the Hilbrands noticed she had remarkable dexterity. A second medical examination failed to uncover any brain damage. At age 12, she now speaks fluently, dresses herself, attends a special school, and has an excellent prognosis.

The stories go on and on.

"We take many of the worst cases in order to show the society, which often takes a rather dim view of evangelical Christian organizations, the tremendous human potential and power of

the living God working within the individual," says Hilbrands.

"Are we experts in this kind of treatment? No," says Hilbrands. "Do we depend upon a living God who can effect miracles and gives discernment and wisdom. Yes."

Apart from their emphasis on God and the Christian gospel, another reason for their success is the amount of attention the children receive.

Kids given attention, love

"We treat these children as sons and daughters, trying to give them all the love and attention that is possible," says Hilbrands. "This is a key characteristic of our home."

Jose Alfredo, 27, also known as "Freddie" by the children, is one of the orphanage's biggest fans.

At one time, he was a resident at the home. Today he teaches science, mathematics, grammar and computers at their school. He's lived and worked at another Christian orphanage in the city. But he returned to Pan de Vida.

"They don't have much space here," says Alfredo. "But I like it because they give more attention here. It really feels like a big family here."

This doesn't mean they would not like more space. The Hilbrands

are convinced that Pan de Vida will continue long after they're gone. In fact, they want former students to manage and administer it. Already two former residents sit on the board of directors.

They hope that one day their dream orphanage will comprise a boys' and girls' dormitory, a cafeteria, visitor's quarters, teachers' apartments, workshops, a school, auditorium, administrative office, medical clinic and a directors' apartment.

Thus far, the effort has been piecemeal. About \$80,000 has been invested in the boys' dorm, currently under construction with the help of volunteer labor. They plan to move the older boys into the new dorm by end of this month.

Then they'll start on the \$160,000 girls, two-story dormitory, which they hope will be completed by year's end.

"At present we have a volunteer Civil Engineer overseeing the project; a job foreman who receives a reduced pay and donates the rest to the cause; a couple of volunteers from Canada; and occasional masonry workers and helpers who are paid," says Hilbrands.

"We're also exploring other sources — basically we just keep praying."

For more information about the orphanage, contact Samaritan's Purse — Canada, Box 20100, Calgary Place, Calgary, AB, T2P 4J2, stipulating Ministerios Pan de Vida or telephone Jorge Aviles at (403) 250-6565 or E-mail: javiles@samaritan.org.

Church leaders suggest solutions for northern Manitoba

... continued from page 1

and negotiation with aboriginal peoples occurred only after the decision to proceed with the Project had been made, after licences to flood reserve land had been granted, and after construction had progressed beyond the point of no return. The damaging Project was imposed on aboriginal peoples."

The panel notes that "Canadians generally have regarded aboriginal peoples as standing in the way of progress.... Principles of inclusion and sharing must be extended to aboriginal peoples."

Environmental, social costs

The environmental impact on affected native groups includes:

- destruction of burial grounds and cultural sites;
- negative impacts on the traditional hunting, fishing and trapping economy;
- flooding of traditional

resource use areas.

To improve the environmental situation, the panel recommends:

- Crown parties should fund an aggressive campaign of cleaning up and restoring shorelines;
- the Project should operate environmentally beneficial water levels.

Social costs of the Project include:

- injury and death due to hazardous navigation conditions;
- displacement from a homeland.

To improve life for the north's young people, the panel suggested: "Grants and programs should be established for students from NFA First Nations to pursue research in their home communities in fields such as environmental studies, health, education, economic development, history and culture." These students could be involved with studies relevant to their own development efforts, and address-

ing impacts of the Project.

Education is a serious problem for northern natives, says Van Eek, because it can be inappropriate for them and, according to one native presenter, "the education leads kids nowhere." This is reflected in a high rate of high school dropouts, notes Van Eek.

Another main problem facing northern natives is lack of meaningful employment. "For them to become self-sufficient, they need something to do that creates income," asserts Van Eek. One idea would be to hire natives to clean up shorelines which have been damaged by the Project. When Van Eek visited one dam, he saw just a few natives working there.

Ongoing church role

Van Eek and his colleagues also want the church to play an ongoing role in helping native people in northern Manitoba. His panel recommended:

• The faith community within the service area of Manitoba Hydro should consider their use of hydro-electricity. Creative ways to redress substantively the unaccounted costs of power production should be pursued;

• An interchurch body with a formal mandate from its church organizations should continue to act in a monitoring role with respect to NFA implementation for the fair treatment of all affected people;

• The faith community, based on its history of bold involvement, must speak publicly for a better future and a fair economic relationship between south and north.

The church should continue to put pressure on government if need be, suggests Van Eek. The CRC will continue to be involved in such issues through the Aboriginal Rights Coalition, he says.

Thinking of future hydro developments, the panel urges that "no future development ought to

proceed without the consent of affected aboriginal peoples, based on due consultation."

Van Eek observes, "Now they're designing more dams, and we're expecting native lives will further be destroyed." For aboriginals, "self-determination is an important long-term solution."

The report has been sent to the three crown agencies, says Van Eek, but so far there has been no government reaction to it. "It's probably too early for that." He notes that the Manitoba government was represented at the hearings by its Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and by the CEO of Manitoba Hydro, but the federal government sent no representative.

But Van Eek adds Manitoba's northern aboriginals "were very grateful that people cared" enough to hold the hearings and produce this report.

(See related story on page 3)

News

Manitoba government responds to northern problems

Alan Doerksen

WINNIPEG — Although Manitoba's northern aboriginals have had their lifestyles drastically changed by power dams, which have flooded much of their land, their grievances have been heard by the province's minister of aboriginal and northern affairs, Eric Robinson, who is himself an aboriginal from that region.

Robinson took part in last year's hearings by an interchurch inquiry about the effects of northern Manitoba's hydro development. Last December, in a speech to Manitoba's legislature, he expressed some of his people's concerns and explained how his government plans to address them.

Unacceptable conditions

"As the members of this House know, the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba are unacceptable," Robinson asserted. "While we cannot immediately reverse the effects of almost a century of neglectful and at times abusive policies, our government is committed to building new partnerships that will lead to improvements in the lives of aboriginal communities and

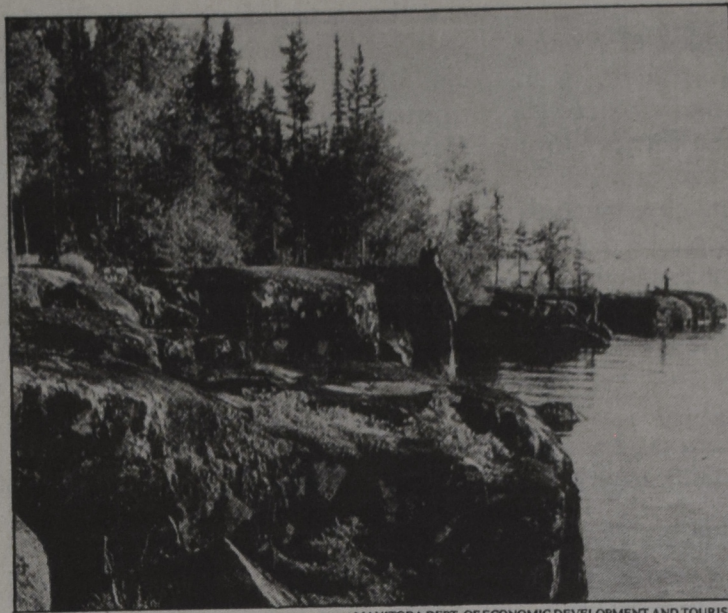
aboriginal people. That is why it is of immediate importance to our government to redress the devastating consequences of the flooding of the lands of First Nations for hydro development."

Struggling with effects of flooding

"The five communities which are party to the 1977 Northern Flood Agreement (NFA) ... have been struggling with the effects of the flooding to this day.

"Our government acknowledges the damage done to the five First Nations as a result of the flooding. We share responsibility with the federal government, Manitoba Hydro and First Nations communities for implementing the NFA and working to improve the quality of life of community residents.

"The government of Manitoba has begun working with the leadership of the five First Nations to establish new partnerships," explained Robinson. "Recently, through Manitoba Hydro, we signed a historic agreement in principle with Tataskewiyak Cree Split Lake First Nation that contemplates employment of Tataskewiyak Cree people in a



MANITOBA DEPT. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

The shoreline of a Manitoba lake. Some northern waterways have had their shorelines eroded because of hydro development.

proposed Gull Rapids project and in the ongoing operations. It also provides the option of the Tataskewiyak acquiring an equity interest in the project. This agreement has been ratified by the members of the community.

"New appointments to the board of Manitoba Hydro will ensure that the views of northern and

Aboriginal communities are well represented. The new board includes three Cree First Nation representatives.... [In December] Hydro announced new targets for training and employing Aboriginal Manitobans.

Other efforts mentioned by Robinson to improve the lives of those affected by the hydro project

include a reduction in hydro rates, the development of a titanium mine, expansion of the shoreline clean-up program, a domestic fishing program and a pledge to work together to address employment, housing and health care needs as well as the problem of youth suicides in the community.

A modern-day treaty

"For the first time in the history of this House, the government of Manitoba recognizes that the NFA is a modern day treaty and expresses its commitment to honor and properly implement the terms of the NFA as recommended by the commissioners of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in 1991," said Robinson. And he offered to the five First Nations to sit down with him, as Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, in a healing ceremony based on Cree traditions, without the presence of lawyers and consultants.

Robinson concluded: "I believe it is time to put the divisions of the past behind us and to begin to talk directly with the communities and their leadership about what is needed to make a difference in the lives of the province's First Nations citizens."

Venezuela faces growing HIV threat

Mark Ellis Senior Correspondent, ASSIST News Service

ANAHEIM, California (ANS) — The picturesque beauty of San Cristobal, Venezuela, set high in the Andes mountains, belies a disturbing trend — the silent and deadly spread of a disease that knows no cure.

"Venezuela has a major problem with HIV," says Bruce Sonnenberg, president of He Intends Victory, a Christian HIV/AIDS organization based in Irvine, California. Sonnenberg, along with a team from He Intends Victory (HIV), recently returned from Venezuela, where they propounded their message of hope in Jesus Christ to those struggling with the insidious disease.

"It's estimated there are about 100,000 cases in Venezuela with HIV and 10,000 cases in San Cristobal," Sonnenberg says. "Those are the known cases," he says, recognizing the fact that many cases are unreported. "The majority of these cases come through drug use — using dirty needles — and through sexual contact."

Tragically, many women are unwittingly infected at home. "In

the area we were in the majority of women contracted HIV from their husbands who brought it home," Sonnenberg says.

Sonnenberg observes different transmission routes for the disease in the different countries his team visits. "In Thailand the major route is sexual; in Malaysia it's IV drug use," he says. "In Vietnam and Venezuela it's a combination."

Stigma, bad information

Part of Sonnenberg and his team's mission is to correct misinformation. "There's a lot of stigma and bad information about HIV," he says. "We find it everywhere we go. People think you become HIV positive by hugging someone or kissing someone or a mosquito carries it."

"We challenge the churches to see those with HIV as a mission field," Sonnenberg says, "because society has rejected them. We go to the schools and educate them about what not to do. We encourage a strong abstinence message to youth," he says. The He Intends Victory team that visited Venezuela included Herb Hall, cofounder of the organization, Dr. Gaylen Yorba Gray, a professor at

Vanguard University, with his wife Joan, and Dr. Jeff Hendricks.

"Speaking to the youth was excellent," Sonnenberg says, about the three-hour session they spent giving their abstinence message to 10-year olds, and another three-hour seminar to their teachers. "We spoke at the University of the Andes and the University of Techira," he says, noting that the governor of the state of Techira is an evangelical Christian, "and 'strongly supports evangelical causes.'"

After finishing one live television broadcast, followed by a radio interview, Sonnenberg was surprised to get an immediate response. "After we finished the broadcast we came downstairs and went out on a busy street," he says. "A woman walked up to me and said, 'Excuse me, can I get a copy of your book? My brother is HIV positive and has no sense of anyone offering any hope.'"

During their visit, one of the He Intends Victory team members, Dr. Hendricks, had an asthma attack, which sent the whole team to a local hospital. "It came on slowly, but finally he couldn't breathe," Sonnenberg says. "They

examined Dr. Hendricks for two hours."

"He was all right, but one of the nurses asked why we were there, and we ended up having a whole session with six nurses," he says. "They shared about a friend of theirs — also a nurse — who was HIV positive, and they requested a copy of our book, which we gave to them. That was a real blessing." The book, *He Intends Victory*, by Dan Wooding, chronicles the beginnings of the ministry, and is available in English as well as Spanish.

A special mission field

The city of San Cristobal is only 45 minutes from the border with Colombia, which leads to problems with rebel groups based in Colombia. "The rebels in Colombia have kidnapped many people from San Cristobal and held them for ransom," Sonnenberg says. "They can make more money coming across the border than by staying in Colombia," he says.

The close proximity also allowed a positive benefit to the team members. "One pastor came across from Colombia and was so excited about seeing this as a

mission field," Sonnenberg says. "He said he knows many people in his country who are HIV positive. He was excited about the Lord and about what the Lord wants to do."

While there is hope in Jesus, the medical establishment faces an uncertain future as new studies suggest current drugs are becoming less effective. "We knew from the beginning that 33 per cent of HIV-positive people were resistant to the drugs," Sonnenberg says. "Now the studies say 78 per cent have developed resistance to one of the HIV drugs," he says. "About 50 per cent of people now will not be able to take the drugs any longer."

"The implication is that people will die quicker," he adds. "One researcher believes people may begin to die like they did in the 80s, one to three years after becoming HIV-positive."

"There is no cure for HIV," Sonnenberg admits. "There's only a cure for the hopelessness of HIV — and that's Jesus Christ."

Mark Ellis is a Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service. He is also the Assistant Pastor at Calvary Evangelical Free Church of Laguna Beach, CA.

Editorial

Reflecting on the connection between love and death

Harry der Nederlanden

This past week, seeing the video of *Moulin Rouge* (reviewed on p.7) and reading Alan Bloom's *Shakespeare on Love and Friendship*, led me to reflect on the connection between love and death. My own illness, of course, brought the reality of my own mortality very much to the foreground in recent months, and Sept. 11 terrorist blow also brought home to a whole culture that death is our constant companion. Not just those of us with a serious illness or their loved ones are forced to live staring death in the face, all of us live with death, for we are finite and our lives are fragile. We all know that at some time our engagement with this present world must come to an end.

Much literature, drama focus on death

Moulin Rouge and Shakespeare's plays brought home to me how much of our good literature and drama circle around the fact of death. The possibility that death might strike at any time is often what provides suspense in our storytelling. But often death — as the obliteration of our best and our noblest efforts — stalks us in more subtle ways. Those who have gone through a gut-wrenching divorce often testify that it can be

worse than actual death. In the Bible, too, death stands for more than simply the biological termination of life; it is that dark, violent force that wreaks destruction at many points in our lives, threatening our work and our lives with meaninglessness.

Death reaches out with its cold claws

As *Moulin Rouge* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* make clear, death gains especial poignancy in the presence of love, particularly when it is young love and when the hero is vital and the heroine beautiful. Love, beauty, youth, vitality — these are symbols of the promise and the hope of a life brimming with intensity and meaning. Death reaches out with its cold claws and threatens to vitiate, to render empty and vain, to expose as a mere illusion all those lovely dreams associated with falling in love and looking ahead to a life of shared bliss.

A great deal of art circles around the fact of death, trying to answer the suspicion that if everything ends up in the grave there's no meaning to our struggles to erect something enduring. Death does not only threaten us individually; it threatens the very basis of our society, our culture, our entire civilization. From the perspective of the universality of death, all our gargantuan efforts to build the human city seem like a futile frenzy to blind ourselves to the reality that it will all crumble to dust.

Love that endures till the end of time

Yet, in the face of death young lovers continue to sing of a love that endures till the end of time. In fact, many love songs and poems evoke death — if only to defy it. Death is love's great enemy and our arts testify to the fact that the human soul, even apart from Christian faith, keeps returning to the dream, the hope that love can and does conquer death. Much contemporary thought holds that although such passion does infuse life with purpose and meaning, it is a fiction. And it is.

Much of what we feel and think is rooted in stories, fictions. Before we even develop a crush on someone as teenagers, we have heard and read and seen dramatized numerous love stories. Often, indeed, we are as much smitten by the idea of being in love and being the central figure in a passionate love story as by the object of our fantasies. In fact, as many feminists have rightly pointed out, in many of the love stories that fuel our ideal of true love, the female is there not as a genuine character in her own right but as nothing more than an idealized object of male fantasy.

Love stories can undermine genuine, mutual love

In this way, love stories can actually undermine genuine, mutual love, love as an abiding commitment and faithfulness to one another in the mundane, quotidian detail of daily life. The sort of passionate love celebrated in *Moulin Rouge* and

Romeo and Juliet does cultivate in us dreams of a world transformed and illuminated by the energy, delight and rapture of passionate love. It is, as C. S. Lewis has reminded us, a deep longing implanted in every human being for the heavenly city, the new heaven and the new earth.

However, by representing true love as being something so miraculous, so unconnected with the nitty-gritty of a life that must deal with deadening jobs, sleepless nights, illness, aging, taxes, wailing children and dirty diapers that it is like a lightning strike rather than a steady current, such fictions can cause us to look for love in the wrong places. It leads us to think that for love to be true there must be this intense electricity, this breathlessness, and that if those fireworks fade away, love, too, must have faded away. It encourages us, too, to think of passion as a lawless, totally free force that cannot be contained in our conventions and institutions. It is a passion, not a law.

Working to sustain love

The Bible, however, commands us to love. And it commands those who are married to keep on working at sustaining that love.

Coming face to face with death not only prompts us to reflect anew on the meaning of life. It also intensifies our appreciation of life. Each day I am grateful for the good things of God's creation, the many things I have grown to love, that I may enjoy them for another day, another season. But above all, I am grateful each day anew for the faithful, ever-giving presence of my wife, Rose. She accompanies me to all my doctor's visits, she was there every day when I was in the hospital and I looked forward to her coming more than I did for the sunrise. She drives me back and forth every day now for my radiation in Hamilton, she worries about my diet and she makes accommodations for my fatigue.

After my operation and treatments, I am hardly a snorting stallion and I am by no means a young lover, but I have discovered anew in the face of my wife what love is, despite the rings under her eyes. And I am repeatedly filled with gratitude to God and to my lovely Rose that he has infused my life with this incredible gift.

When the Bible tells us that in the new heaven and the new earth there shall be no marriage and no giving in marriage, a twinge goes through my heart. My wife has become so much flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone that I cannot imagine myself without her; our identities have become fused.

When it comes to the resurrection, I will have a bone to pick with someone on that score. Surely, surely, such love cannot be dissolved by the grave but will be celebrated and renewed in the heavenly city that awaits.

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Opinion

A nation without homelessness, hunger, poverty will have hope

The following was written for the 'Have Your Say' column of the Toronto Star by Gerald Vandezande and is reprinted here by permission.

Bringing the homeless out of the cold

Gerald Vandezande, C.M.

A nation without homelessness, hunger and poverty is a nation with hope and promise! It is a nation in which human dignity and community are becoming a social and economic reality; a nation in which justice and equity are becoming a visible way of life.

A dynamic way of life slowly but surely conquers dark ways of death. Ways of death are destructive ways that undermine mutual respect and mutual responsibility, wicked ways that widen the intolerable gap between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, the haves and the have-nots.

Ways of life foster mutually respectful and mutually supportive relations among people who are created to be neighbors, who are called to love and respect each other by doing justice, showing mercy, and practising faithfulness — in all their relations, professions, and occupations.

Vital importance of civil society

A nation with hope and promise treasures the vital importance of a civil society. A civil society is a society in which all persons



BERT WITVOET

and communities, institutions and organizations, businesses and media, schools and trade unions, and, yes, our governments too, not only say that we belong together; they also show, in their everyday activities, policies and programs that they are vitally interested in the well-being of others!

A nation without hunger and poverty is without homelessness, malnutrition, social

alienation, racial discrimination, economic exclusion, chronic unemployment, and violence.

A nation with hope breaks with the ideologies of individualism and laissez-faire capitalism. A nation with hope rejects as discriminatory and immoral fiscal policies that mostly target the vulnerable to enrich the wealthy.

A nation with promise seeks justice, encourages the oppressed, defends the voiceless and the vulnerable, and pleads the case of the orphan and the widow (as the Prophet insists in Isaiah 1:17).

Motivated by careful stewardship

A nation with hope develops an economy that is not driven by ruthless exploitation and limitless greed, but instead is motivated by careful stewardship in active support of a sustainable quality way of life for all people.

A nation with promise deeply treasures human rights, sustainable environment and

supportive infrastructures. It includes quality education, adequate child care, comprehensive health care and decent housing for all people, including vulnerable families dependent on social assistance for daily survival.

A nation with hope enjoys the common commitment of diverse communities who share core values that transcend the individualist ideology of the survival of the fittest.

Mutual responsibility: a tie that binds

A nation with hope and promise affirms the God-given identity of our common humanity. It recognizes our common calling to view mutual respect as a way to justice, linking people and communities through bonds of equity and fairness. As well, it promotes mutual responsibility as a tie that binds, linking people and communities through deeds of compassion and solidarity.

A nation without homelessness, hunger and poverty is a nation with hope and promise. Such a nation is a caring and sharing society. Such a society consistently practices mutuality and sustainability. These core values should shape our life and institutions. Such a society rejects the callous pursuit of still more profit and power for individualistic and corporate interests. Such a nation, such a society, embraces the common good based on public justice for all people.

A nation is filled with hope and promise when its neighborhoods and streets are not filled with homeless and poor people, but with caring neighbors doing justice, showing mercy, and practising faithfulness (as Jesus says we should in Matthew 23:23).

Gerald Vandezande is the former National Public Affairs Director of Citizens for Public Justice, and a volunteer spokesperson for the Campaign Against Child Poverty. Vandezande is the author of Justice, Not Just Us: Faith Perspectives and National Priorities, available from the Public Justice Resource Centre, Suite 311, 229 College St., Toronto M5T 1R4.

Even after Sept. 11, religion continues to be marginalized

Alex Buchan

The events of September 11 may not have changed the world as radically as everyone first claimed, but the world of religious liberty was treated to a grandstanding transformation.

Syndicated columnists, international affairs experts, and talk-show pundits, who had so studiously ignored religion until then, magically metamorphosed themselves overnight into religious liberty specialists. They lectured us on the beliefs of Islam, quoted from the Koran to provide insights into the nature of terrorism, warned us of the dangers of professing theological absolutes in a pluralistic society, and set out new guidelines for the management of religion in modern — and some not so modern — societies.

Did Sept. 11 toll the bell for that modern disease, "secular myopia," defined by persecution scholar Paul Marshall as "an inability even to see, much less understand, the role of religion in human life?" Are the luminaries of the Fourth Estate and the academic and political establishments now cured of their secular myopia and henceforth convinced of the centrality of religion to human conflict and life?

Religion misunderstood, misrepresented

The answer is no! Religion continues to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and — strangest of all — still utterly marginalized by this new breed.

The new gathering of post-Sept. 11 religious liberty experts divides into two distinct schools. There are those who say, "All religions are intrinsically bad and lead to violence." Another group says, "All religions are intrinsically good and lead to peace." Both views reflect a shard of truth, but they end in a catastrophic failure of understanding the true nature of religious conflict and neglect the necessity of religious reconciliation.

Religion bad, humanism good

The more atheistic commentators had a field day after Sept. 11 and were most prominent in this group.

Richard Dawkins, the Charles Symonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science, wrote in the British newspaper *Guardian*: "No weapon is potentially more dangerous than a mind bent on attaining eternal salvation, whatever the faith."

Columnist Polly Toynbee told us, "A perverted abhorrence of half the human race lies at the maggoty heart of religion."

Matthew Parris of the *London Times* lumped Christianity and Islam together, because they have two common features that make them so "dangerous": a claim to universality and a belief in the afterlife, which puts "another world" before this one. He called for a return to a celebration of the "here and now," clearly implying that only those with a materialist worldview could be

See **ROLE OF RELIGION** page 11...

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Environment

Church body, Sierra Club promote alternatives to Alaska oil drilling



STEVE OGDEN, TOM STACK & ASSOC.

An oil rig north of Alaska's Brooks Mountain Range.

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ENI) — The National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. (NCC) has joined forces with a leading American environmental group to launch an advertisement campaign to promote alternatives to controversial plans for oil drilling in an Alaskan wildlife refuge.

The first-ever joint television and newspaper advertisement campaign by the NCC and the Sierra Club, one of the longest-established environmental bodies in the U.S., says that oil drilling in "special places" such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska does not provide the answer to meeting the energy needs of the U.S.

Cleaner, safer alternatives

U.S. President George W. Bush supports the plans for drilling, but environmentalists claim that oil drilling could damage the region's ecosystem. The U.S. Senate is

expected to vote in March on oil exploration within the wildlife refuge.

The advertisement campaign says that the energy needs of the U.S. can be met from "quicker, cleaner, cheaper and safer solar energy-efficient technologies, and alternative energy power like solar and wind."

The advertisements are part of a wider effort by the NCC in recent years to make environmental protection a more prominent part of its ministry. During the past decade, care for the environment has become an issue increasingly championed by the American faith community.

"People of faith take seriously the biblical mandate to be good stewards of creation, and that means finding smarter, cleaner, safer ways to satisfy our energy needs without damaging the irreplaceable gifts of nature with which our nation has been so blessed," Robert Edgar, the NCC's

general secretary, said in a statement about the advertisement campaign.

Edgar, a former Democratic congressman, said conservation would provide "much greater benefits that are more permanent, and in the long run are less costly, than a modest and short-lived increase in oil supply at the price of a ravaged environment."

Do not ruin it

The advertisements are appearing this month on local television stations and in newspapers in the states of Georgia, Arizona,

North Dakota, Indiana, Missouri and Delaware.

The television advertisements evoke biblical pronouncements to protect creation, quoting a Jewish prayer: "God said: 'This is a beautiful world I have given you. Take care of it; do not ruin it.'"

The ad continues with shots of mountainous and coastal areas and includes a narration that says the United States does not need "to ruin the land we love, the land left in our care, to meet America's energy needs."

The newspaper advertisements evoke similar themes.

Carl Pope, the Sierra Club's executive director, said: "When Americans want renewal and inspiration, we sit by a river or hike to a mountaintop. America's beautiful landscapes are too valuable to dig, drill and destroy — instead, we need an energy policy that is clean and safe. With modern technology, we can have clean energy and protect the places Americans love."

The NCC provided staff assistance and consulting for the advertisements, which were paid for by the Sierra Club.

A Taylor-made Solution

Some ideas simply get better with age. This one is nearly a century old and was born on the heels of personal tragedy. The story revolves around one of the great unsung heroes of faith-based environmental concern in Canada. The Reverend George Edward Taylor is not a household name among Canadians. But maybe he should be, at least among Christians.

Born in Derby, England in 1854 his aptitude and early curiosity for nature were clear. The rigorous training as an apprentice mining-engineer gave way to the practised eye of a dedicated field-naturalist. In his early twenties, he opted for a 19th century version of ecotourism — an adventure tour to North America's Vancouver Island.

A naturalist in Nanaimo

Shortly after arriving, he discovered the natural beauty and biological riches of Departure Bay at Nanaimo. The young Taylor traveled widely on the Island searching out its natural secrets but settled first in Victoria. There, his gentle ways, administrative skills, and deep personal faith caught the attention of the Bishop. Taylor began a course of theological study, practiced as a lay reader, and in 1886 was ordained in the Church of England.

Over the next 20 years, Taylor developed into a dedicated parish pastor, while remaining an avid naturalist. He earned a reputation as a fearless and faithful priest who "never hesitated to go underground to administer last rites to a miner critically injured." Meanwhile his scientific work was gaining a wider audience and in 1894 he was elected a Fellow in the Royal Society of Canada.

Tragedy and triumph

In the winter of 1895, shortly after the birth of their fourth child, Bessie Taylor died. Left a single parent, with a young family, George considered leaving for England. But in a stressful, but creative move Taylor accepted an offer of land on Gabriola Island. This was a turning point in his career, and for the rest of his life, although he continued to serve small congregations, his main work was scientific.

The parson-naturalist

The decline of the great whales, once so abundant in Pacific waters, and the complete collapse

Creation waits...

John Wood

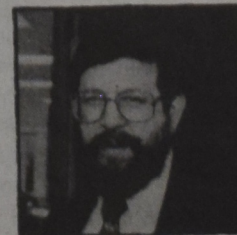


of the Adams River salmon run in 1903 brought public and political attention to these environmental concerns. Taylor reported his growing concern over the environmental havoc of unregulated resource extraction. He lobbied tirelessly for the federal government to begin investigating the rich natural resources of the seas around Vancouver Island. In 1905 he was appointed to the B.C. Fisheries Commission. And in 1907 the Dominion government answered his plea for a biological station on the Pacific Coast. George Taylor was appointed the first curator of the new station.

Science in service

Taylor was a skilled collector, with a passion for the scientific exploration of nature. Around him gathered researchers from Canada, the U.S. and overseas. His insistence on scientific rigor, applied problem-solving and peer-reviewed publication helped establish a sound scientific institution for fisheries and oceans research. The Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo has grown from his vision into a world-class scientific research facility.

Today we might call Taylor an environmentalist. Or better yet, simply a faithful Earthkeeper, *par excellence*. But Taylor didn't jump on any bandwagon. Rather he created an entirely new vehicle for scientific research on Vancouver Island that is still carrying us forward today. Thanks to his efforts, we have a more complete understanding of the remarkable biological riches on our shores. His example stands to encourage a new generation of women and men to increase the rigor of their efforts at faith-based environmental practice. Missionary earthkeepers, in organizations like A Rocha-Canada, among many others, are following his example. It seems as if the entire creation is waiting in eager expectation to see the results.



John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Tips for a Healthier Home

- Reduce or remove as many asthma or allergy triggers from your home as possible; pay attention to dust and mites. Many problems can be prevented by ensuring surfaces are clean and preventing or eliminating sources of dampness, which can encourage the growth of mould.
- Consider the building products used in your home, as many can emit harmful gases or particles. These should be kept to a minimum. Storage of chemicals and cleaning agents should also be limited to the garage whenever possible.
- Proper ventilation is key to good indoor air quality. Ensure that all ventilation systems, including vents, duct work, heating and cooling systems, air filters, etc. are cleaned and maintained regularly. The air can also be cleaned with systems like the

HEPA (High Energy Particulate Air) air cleaning system, which removes airborne particles and common household allergens such as pet dander, pollen and mould.

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Arts/Media

Film Review

A world-transforming love: illusion or reality

Moulin Rouge

Starring Nicole Kidman as Satine and Ewan McGregor as Christian
Directed by Baz Luhrmann
Available on video
Harry der Nederlanden

When the Golden Globe Awards were handed out, the film *Moulin Rouge* scooped up several. They were well-deserved. It's a work of art that makes you laugh and makes you cry, makes you feel and makes you think, and it certainly brings all your senses into play.

The film makes startling, humorous use of music and films made long after the date in which it is set (1899); it juxtaposes elements of farce, musical, dance, comedy and tragedy; it exploits a clichéd storyline that has been done a thousand times before; yet, it is able to move us. Does it do so by manipulating us with colorful illusions? Perhaps. That's one of the central themes of the film: can love ever transcend the realm of illusion?

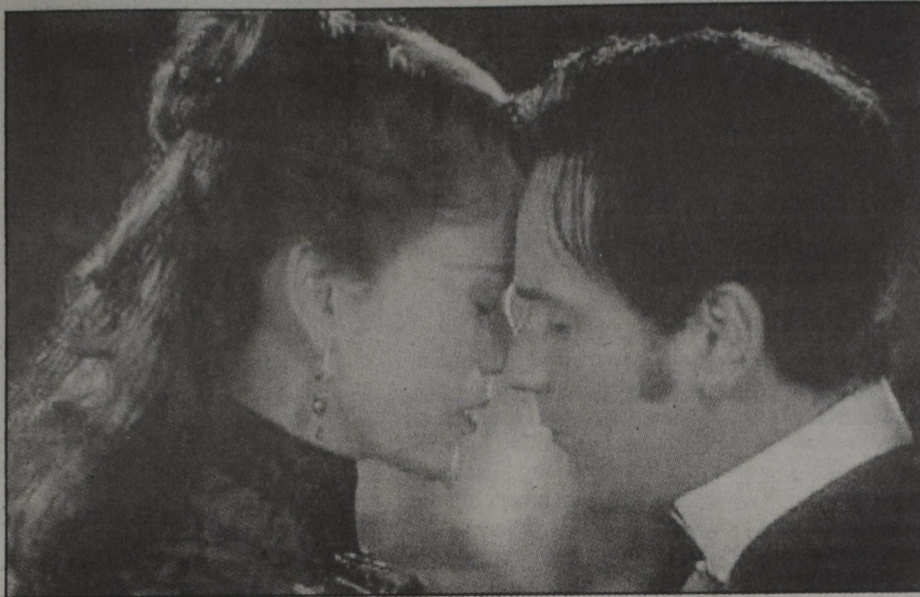
Bohemian underworld

Moulin Rouge does not get much good press from most of the Christian websites created to guide us in our appreciation of the popular art of film. That's a shame. I can, however, understand the reasons for it. They are obvious. The story is set in a huge bordello on the outskirts of Paris in the bohemian quarters. Here, prostitutes and other creatures of the underworld mix with artists, playwrights, poets and revolutionary idealists dedicated to the ideals of beauty, freedom, truth and love. It is a sensualistic, decadent world, where the rich come to satisfy their base appetites.

To tell the truth, I was put off morally by the opening scenes set in the gaudy, nihilistic bordello called the Moulin Rouge (Red Windmill). It features acres of showgirls – prostitutes really – dancing wildly, flipping up their skirts and flashing their best features to a huge hall full of men in top hats and evening dress seething with lust. There's little to distinguish the master of ceremonies of the floorshow, Harold Siedler (seedlier?), from a flashy pimp.

Sodom and Gomorrah

The filmgoer becomes part of that decadent, orgiastic crowd on the floor of the Moulin Rouge. What came to my mind as I watched these opening minutes were the names Sodom and



Nicole Kidman as Satine and Ewan McGregor as Christian in *Moulin Rouge*.

Gomorrah. The noisy, colorful scene titillates the eye, and we ask ourselves, Should I be here? Should I be part of this? The film courts this sort of moral judgment deliberately, I think, for the sensationalism is over the top. The spectacle, the appeal to the senses, in many ways captures the underlying thrust of a good deal of contemporary entertainment: it is all designed to arouse our senses, to stir up desire. Doesn't all art do this in some way?

Not a Dutch Calvinist windmill

The huge Red Windmill, all lit up with thousands of glittering, red lights, is not a Dutch Calvinist windmill whose purpose is purely functional – to keep the sea from reclaiming farmland eked from it by hard labor. No, this Red Windmill is a dream factory, a space of erotic fantasy and illusion. But it also reminds us of the windmills in Don Quixote. Remember that Quixote is the hero who becomes something nobler by pursuing his romantic illusion that he is a knight devoted to his beautiful Dulcinea. But in *Moulin Rouge*, this romantic illusion shows its seedy, greedy side right from the beginning.

Attracted by the idealism of the bohemians – their dedication to beauty, freedom, truth and love – Christian, a young writer from London, moves into a hotel room across from the Moulin Rouge to write his first novel – a story about love. The film purports to be the story Christian ends up writing after he experiences the events depicted in the film. Within this story we see Christian writing another story, a play actually, which

indirectly relates to the real love story we see unfolding before our eyes. It's a play in process, with the author, Christian, contending with the rich, evil Duke how the story will end. At stake is the lovely star, Satine, the sparkling diamond at the centre of the gaudy bordello.

Suddenly crashing in

Christian becomes a playwright when one of the acting troupe rehearsing in the room above his comes crashing through the ceiling and his friends come rushing downstairs to continue the rehearsal in Christian's room. They are working on a musical called "Spectacular Spectacular." However, the leading man is plagued by narcolepsy: he'll suddenly fall asleep in the middle of rehearsal and keel over like a felled tree. One of the other actors in the troupe is a dwarf with a lisp. He is called Toulouse-Lautrec, the French artist famous for his depictions of dancing girls, actresses and prostitutes. He keeps lisping the bohemian ideals of beauty, freedom, truth and, above all, love.

As the troupe collectively tries out words for a song in their musical, Christian is suddenly inspired and begins singing (in 1899!) the theme song from *The Sound of Music*: "The hills are alive with the sound of music..." Clearly, we are in the realm of fantasy and farce; yet, this is supposed to be the story that tells the truth about a love that transcends the false, illusion of love created for the rich by the girls of the Moulin Rouge.

Along with the rest of the habitués of the Moulin Rouge, Christian is also taken by the beautiful Satine. But while the Duke seeks

to possess her as payment for his support for staging the "Spectacular Spectacular", Christian wants her to star in his play. Christian and Satine fall in love and Satine dreams of escaping the world of the Moulin Rouge in which she feigns love to a world in which love is real, a world transformed by love.

Satine is the very embodiment of beauty and love to the panting crowds

in the Moulin Rouge, but before Christian she had never known real love; however, as she discovers love, she also discovers that she is dying. And in order to save her true love's life from the vengeance of the possessive Duke, she must pretend her love for Christian was

only a pretense.

Is true love no more than another illusion, a story told and retold so often we believe in it, so that it isn't all that different from the illusion of love created by the courtesans of the Moulin Rouge? Or does it have a transcendent reality – the power to transform the world and lift us out of our lust to possess?

A Christian sensibility

It is, of course, quite possible to come away from this film with nothing more than a celebration of the religion of art, imagination and human love. But a Christian sensibility will also see in it the ineradicable human longing for a love that redeems and transforms our self-seeking world, which turns even love and beauty into a commodity, into a new world which is based on a love that is self-sacrificial. The film *Moulin Rouge* can remind us that the love that comes from God doesn't erase human love and passion but gives it its meaning, filling it and transforming it into a force that makes the world sparkle with a newness brighter far than the gaudy world of the Red Windmill.

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Church

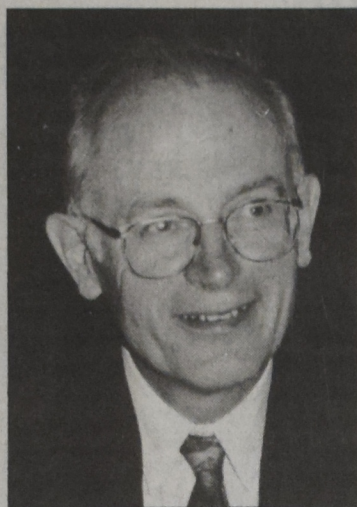
Three Toronto ecumenists to tackle tough issues together

TORONTO (Press Release) — Three Toronto professors from different churches who are all active in international ecumenical dialogue will team up at the Toronto School of Theology next fall to teach a course on the tough issues still dividing the churches.

Announced publicly to mark this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-24), the prospective course will stimulate discussion among different points of view from both students and professors. Teaming up to teach the course on ecumenism together are Margaret O'Gara, professor of theology at the Faculty of Theology in the University of St. Michael's College; George Vandervelde, professor of theology at the Institute for Christian Studies; and Rev. Peter Wyatt, principal of Emmanuel College in Victoria University.

Checklist of controversies

Topics for the course read like a checklist of controversies among



George Vandervelde

the churches. Women's ordination, the papacy, justification by faith, gender-inclusive language for God, conscience, teaching authority, the eucharist, and Christ's uniqueness will all be studied in the course, called "Breakthroughs

and Barriers in Ecumenical Dialogue."

"We want this course to tackle the difficult issues that have not yet been resolved in our dialogue," said O'Gara. "We hope that our work in the classroom will contribute to further reconciliation among our churches."

Team-taught course

Each professor for the team-taught course has been active in international ecumenical work for years. O'Gara, a Roman Catholic, is on the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Commission on Unity and the Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue. Vandervelde, a member of the Christian Reformed Church, is cochair of the Evangelical-Roman Catholic International Consultation. Wyatt, an ordained minister and former ecumenical officer for the United Church of Canada, is a member of the Reformed-Roman

Catholic International Dialogue.

The initiative for the course came from Wyatt. "As I thought about teaching a course on ecumenism, it seemed so much better actually to teach it ecumenically," Wyatt explained. While many courses on ecumenism are regularly taught by O'Gara and Vandervelde, the course next fall marks the first time that a course will be team-taught at the Toronto School of Theology by three professors from these three churches.

Students from any of the seven church colleges and four affiliated schools of the Toronto School of Theology may register for the course. Auditors are also welcome for the course, taught Wednesday mornings starting September 11.

Colleges of the Toronto School of Theology include Emmanuel College (United Church of Canada); Knox College (Presbyterian Church in Canada); Regis College, St. Augustine's Seminary, and the Faculty of Theology at the Univer-

sity of St. Michael's College (all Roman Catholic); Trinity College and Wycliffe College (both Anglican). Affiliated schools are McMaster Divinity College (Baptist); the Institute for Christian Studies (Reformed); Conrad Grebel College and the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre; and Waterloo Lutheran Seminary.

More light than heat

Director of the Toronto School of Theology Rev. David Neelands, an Anglican, expressed enthusiasm about plans for the course. "This is an exciting illustration of how an ecumenical federation of theological colleges can work to increase understanding of ourselves and others," he said.

Vandervelde had the last word about the course, commenting, "Whereas past polemics created more heat than light, I expect that this course will generate perhaps some heat but a good deal more light."

Number of Americans with no formal religion increasing, survey finds

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ENI) — Though the United States remains a strongly religious nation, the percentage of Americans saying they have no formal religious identity is growing, the authors of a recent survey have concluded.

A national survey of US religious affiliation suggests the existence of a "wide and possibly growing swath of secularism" in the American population.

The American Religious Identification Survey 2001, released by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), also suggests that the proportion of Christians in the U.S. has dropped — from 86 per cent in 1990, when the study was first conducted, to 77 per cent in 2001.

The study was released late in 2001 after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. — events that, by nearly all accounts, swelled the numbers of people attending religious services.

But Egon Mayer, one of the co-authors of the study, said Sept. 11 had not permanently altered the U.S. religious landscape. Increased attendance at religious services immediately after the attacks did not change the basic religious affiliations that he and co-author Barry Kosmin studied.

"People didn't attend church or synagogue just for religious reasons. They wanted to be around other people," Mayer told ENI.

"People probably feel more religious, but whether they have changed behavior is another question."

Another survey, conducted by the Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and released last month, confirmed part of Mayer's contention.

In the Pew study, 78 per cent of those surveyed in November 2001 said the influence of religion in the United States was growing — an increase over an earlier, March survey, in which only 37 per cent of those questioned had felt the influence of religion on the rise.

No sudden increase since Sept. 11

Yet the November Pew survey found no evidence that religion was suddenly playing a larger role in Americans' personal lives. The proportion of those surveyed post-Sept. 11 who said that religion was important in their own lives — 61 per cent — was virtually unchanged from what it had been in the March study.

Other findings of the CUNY American Religious Identification Survey for 2001 were:

- Fifty-two per cent of adults were Protestant, 24.5 per cent were Catholic, and 14.1 per cent adhered to no religion. Jews and Muslims remained relatively small groups in the U.S., Jews representing 1.3 per cent of the population, and Muslims, 0.5 per cent.

- Some 33 million American

adults had changed their religious identification at some point.

- The groups making the largest gains since 1990 included Evangelical Christians, non-denominational Christians and those who professed no religion.

Those who claimed no formal religious affiliation were not, however, atheists: only 0.4 per cent of the people surveyed identified themselves as atheists.

Despite a strong sentiment in the United States that the country has undergone something of a "religious re-awakening" in recent years, the study concluded that the population's large secular segment should not be ignored.

The finding was "completely consistent with similar secularizing trends in other Western, democratic societies", the authors concluded. "The magnitude and role of this large secular segment of the American population is frequently ignored by scholars and politicians alike."

Asked about what appeared to be a growing segment of Americans interested in spirituality but not organized religion, Mayer acknowledged that the survey did not account for such a group directly.

"The spiritual question throws a curve ball into this," he said, adding that he hoped future surveys would incorporate a category for non-religious spirituality.

Mayer said the challenges of a religious survey were considerable, given the dynamic character

of U.S. religious and spiritual practice. "The possibilities of how people ... identify themselves are

endless," he told ENI. "People are pulled by longing, memory, family, even guilt."

Churches welcome Indian government decision on aid

Anto Akkara

NEW DELHI (ENI) — Church officials have praised a move by India's federal government to extend the supply of subsidized wheat and rice to the entire 7.3 million population of the poverty-stricken areas of the eastern state of Orissa.

"This is a very positive decision," Bishop-elect A. C. Khosla of the Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church told ENI on January 11 from the Koraput district of Orissa, where the church's headquarters are based.

India's federal food minister, Shanta Kumar, announced last week that 1.4 million families — accounting for 7.3 million people — in the starvation-hit districts of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput would be eligible for food grain subsidized by 30 per cent. Previously only families below the official poverty level had been entitled to the subsidized food.

Orissa's state government had been accused of insensitivity and callousness for failing to acknowledge that people were starving to death in the region in July and August last year while official food

stocks were rotting in government granaries. India's federal government was also criticized for its slowness to act.

Khosla said that although the federal government's decision to extend the supply of subsidized grain had "come late", he hoped it would "bring relief to the people."

"We are happy that the government has responded to the problem [of starvation] at last," Bibeknando Jash, an emergency officer of Churches Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), told ENI.

CASA, which stepped in last year to provide food to the starving, is the social action wing of the National Council of Churches in India, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant churches.

However, Jash warned that people in the region lacked the purchasing power to buy the grain — even at subsidized rates. The drought-prone region offered few employment opportunities and faced chronic poverty. "Unless the government undertakes major economic development projects in this backward area, the people will continue to starve," he asserted.

Church

Letter from underground church reveals details of torture, murder

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A letter from members of an underground Chinese Christian church reveals graphic details and new information about the Chinese government's crackdown on Pastor Gong Shengliang and his South China Church in central Hubei province.

Pastor Gong was sentenced to death on Dec. 5 on charges of operating an "evil cult" and charges of rape and assault. The month-long period for deciding his appeal was extended Jan. 5 by a Hubei court

following sharp international protest, reports Freedom House, an American religious rights organization. The South China Church is known within the Chinese underground Christian community and to churches in the United States.

Police tortured Christians

The letter, dated Dec. 31 was written by two underground Christian women, Li Ailian and Wang Yue. It was smuggled into the U.S. and given to the New York-based Committee for Investigation on

Persecution of Religion in China.

Li and Wang report that during efforts to apprehend Pastor Gong and suppress the South China Church, police arrested and severely beat at least 25 Christians, and tortured others with electric prods. Two victims reportedly died from their inflicted wounds.

One of the victims was Yu Zhongju, a young mother from Zhongxiang, who was arrested May 27 in a private house connected with Pastor Gong's congregation. She died in police custody

in late July, allegedly as a result of torture. According to her family, police paid them money and warned them not to raise the matter further. There has been no official investigation of the case, Freedom House reports.

Victim disappeared

The other victim, Gu Xuegui, a Christian man also connected with Pastor Gong's church, disappeared while in police custody in October. Gu was last seen in a prison vehicle and had wounds consistent with previous descriptions of torture practice by Chinese police. His family later received information that he had died under severe torture.

The letter also provides details about two women, Li Tongjin and Chi Tongyuan, from Shayang,

who were arrested and tortured by police with electric prods, resulting in blisters and burns all over their bodies. The torture was reported to have been used to force them to testify that they had sexual relations with Pastor Gong.

The letter reports numerous other cases from May through December 2001 of brutal police beatings of the congregants. It states Pastor Gong was apprehended by police Aug. 8, and was kicked and beaten by government security forces.

In a separate communiqué from the underground South China Church, Freedom House obtained the names of 63 men and women of the Church who were arrested between May and December 2001 in Hubei, Henan, Hebei and Sichuan provinces.

The song of the valiant woman

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." (Prov 31:10, KJV)

"A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies" (Prov 31:10, NIV)

Long-term readers of this column (if there are such) will be aware that I have long had an interest in the concluding section of the book of Proverbs, which begins with the verse just quoted. Over the years I have devoted a number of columns to it, and I have also published several scholarly articles in professional journals dealing with various aspects of its interpretation. At the risk of provoking an irritated response — along the lines of "Oh no, here he goes again! — allow me to say a few more things about this intriguing passage.

The occasion for my doing so is the recent publication of my book *The Song of the Valiant Woman. Studies in the Interpretation of Proverbs 31:10-31* (Carlisle UK: Paternoster Press, 2001). This volume is a collection of six scholarly studies of mine, two of them previously unpublished, about this extraordinary passage and the history of its interpretation. It is the product of almost 25 years of fascinated engagement with this text.

Not virtuous but heroic

Why do I call the concluding section of Proverbs "The Song of the Valiant Woman"? Well, for one thing, it is best called a "song" because it is an example of ancient Hebrew poetry, and this poetry, like the ancient poetry of most literatures of the world, was originally meant to be sung, probably to the accompaniment of a harp or lyre. In this regard it is no different from one of the psalms of David. Furthermore, the phrase which the King James translators rendered as "a virtuous woman," Hebrew *eshet chayil*, is actually the feminine counterpart of *gibbor chayil*, which the King James Version translates as "mighty man of valour." It is the first indication (there are many more) that the Song is written as a kind of "heroic poetry," the kind of poetry that was written to celebrate the exploits of warriors on the battlefield. Thus the Valiant Woman is deliberately portrayed as a "heroine," whose exploits in economic production, international trade, and management of a large estate, are here celebrated in song.

Incidentally, although the history of interpretation of the Song contains many examples of interpreters missing the "heroic" temper of this song,

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters

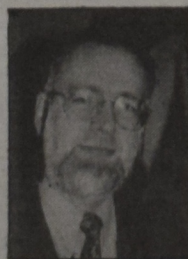


the rendering "a virtuous woman" in the King James Version is not one of them. In the Elizabethan English of Shakespeare's day, which is also the English of the KJV, the adjective "virtuous" had a much broader application than it has today. When we hear today of a "virtuous" woman, we tend to think of someone whose morality (perhaps especially, whose sexual morality) is beyond reproach. But "virtuous" in Elizabethan England could also mean "valiant" or "heroic," and that is undoubtedly what the KJV translators had in mind. Unfortunately this meaning is no longer understood by most readers of the KJV today, so that they are easily misled into reading this whole passage as depicting a well-behaved suburban housewife.

A female Giuliani

The New King James Version, which seeks to remove such examples of misleading archaic English in the KJV, has failed to do so here, since it has retained "virtuous." This unfortunate failure to capture the "heroic" character of the *eshet chayil* is also found in other contemporary versions, especially those favored by conservative evangelicals. The NIV has "a wife of noble character," and the New Living Bible "a virtuous and capable wife," thus reinforcing the impression that the woman in question is being described in moral rather than heroic terms. This is like saying that New York's mayor Rudi Giuliani was "well-behaved" when he rose to the challenge posed by the events of September 11. It may be true, but it misses the point.

The Bible depicts the Valiant Woman as someone who is energetic, enterprising, resourceful, and generous, and a pillar of her household. But the point of the Song is that all of these "heroic" characteristics are rooted and focused in her religious commitment. "A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (verse 30).



Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. His recently published book is available from the Redeemer University College bookstore.

Nigerian police uncover plan to attack Christians

Obed Minchakpu

ABUJA, Nigeria (Compass) — Nigerian police officials have discovered plans by some top Muslim clerics to mobilize their followers for attacks on Christians and government interests such as police and military personnel.

According to an October 20 report sent to police commands by Inspector-General Musiliu Smith, the Muslim clerics are collaborating with Islamic fundamentalists from the Niger Republic. The report, which was made available to Compass at police headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, said the Muslim clerics from Nigeria and their counterparts in Niger held a strategy meeting on October 13 in Maradi, Niger.

The report did not reveal the names of the clerics. "Report at IG's [inspector-general] disposal

revealed that some 'ulamas' [Muslim clerics] ... agreed on a plan to launch attacks on police and military personnel and non-Muslims in some selected states in Nigeria. Dates and places of planned attacks not disclosed," the report stated. In addition, the report said that in view of the current United States-led war on terrorism, which is likely to precipitate the possibility of reprisal attacks by terrorists on countries supporting the U.S., security should be increased nationwide, especially in northern Nigeria.

In Kano state of northern Nigeria, 600 Christians were missing and 350 died during violent anti-American protests that took place in Kano city October 14 - 18. Five churches were burned during the riots.

Bomb explodes at Pakistan church

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (EP) — A bomb exploded inside of a Christian church in Islamabad on Jan. 13, causing the roof to collapse and widespread structural damage. The church was empty at the time. Church leaders believe the attack on the church was an act of retaliation by Islamic extremists angered by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's pledge to crack down on militant groups.

The day before the blast, Musharraf announced Pakistan would not tolerate terrorist groups and that Pakistanis were "fed up with religious extremism." He

vowed to close mosques and Islamic religious schools that teach an extremist version of Islam and instigate violence. Subsequently, several mosques and schools were raided, resulting in the arrest of over 300 people. Some Islamic extremist groups active in Kashmir have been banned by Pakistan as part of Musharraf's pledge.

"This latest bombing in Islamabad prove[s] that the Pakistani government has only just begun dealing with the problem of Islamic extremism," said Steve Snyder, president of International Christian Concern.

Opinion

Churches should not break Canada's laws about ministers and boards

Dick L. Kranendonk

I hesitantly enter into the discussion about the appropriateness of ministers (and other paid staff) of churches serving on its board of directors.

David Englehard, general secretary of the Christian Reformed Church in North America responded to an article by David van der Woerd (CC, June 25, 2001). In the same issue of *Christian Courier* (January 14, 2002) in which Englehard's article appears, Wietse Posthumus, legal counsel for the CRCNA for corporate affairs in Canada, also responds to van der Woerd's earlier observations and concerns.

At the outset, I want to make it clear that I am not a lawyer. I am a senior employee of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), an umbrella organization for more than 2,200 churches and other Christian charities in Canada. A number of years ago, CCCC obtained a legal opinion on the issue under discussion from a national law firm with expertise in trust law and charity law. My comments are at least in part informed by that legal opinion.

Scratching my head

Englehard's response to van der Woerd left me scratching my head. Had I failed to understand the Belgic Confession and the recommended operational bylaw adopted by Synod? I consulted both documents as well as the wording of the letters patent approved by Synod. (For those who may not be familiar with these technical terms, the letters patent and bylaws of a corporation together form its constitution.)

Belgic confession article 30

Article 30 of the Belgic confession indeed states that council of the church is made up of the ministers, elders and deacons of the one true Church (see article 28). But the council's duties that are listed are exclusively ecclesiastical in nature. There is nothing in article 30 that even remotely deals with the administration of property to which the church holds title as trustee.

Taken in its historical context, the National Synod of Dordrecht could not have foreseen a situation other than the state church system



ALAN DOERKSEN

of the Netherlands at that time. The common law and trust law was foreign to the Dutch legal tradition. I do not think it appropriate for Englehard to state that the Belgic confession speaks to the issue addressed by van der Woerd.

As he begins to address the issue of ministers as members of the board of directors, Englehard states that there is "apparently no dispute that this practice is required by our confession..." I, for one, emphatically reject the proposition that either the confessions or the Bible prescribe such a practice.

The general operating bylaw for local churches approved by Synod also concludes that the confessions, the *Church Order* and scripture do not require ministers to serve on the board of directors of the local church. If this were a fundamental requirement, sub-article 11.02 b) would be contradictory. That article permits the local church to remove the minister as a director without in any way affecting the minister's status as a church employee or pastor.

Englehard indicates that the Canadian board of trustees of the CRCNA wrestled with this issue for several years and obtained legal advice to deal with this issue. Unfortunately, the legal advice received appears to be flawed. I want to be cautious in this assessment because I have read only the excerpts quoted by Englehard. I assume that Englehard has accurately summarized them.

Naive and ineffective

Englehard states that, on advice of legal council, the board of trustees recommended that churches incorporate under the *Canada*

Corporations Act so that the authority for ministers to be members of the board of directors could be included in the bylaw filed under that statute. If that was the understanding and belief, it appears to be naive and ineffective.

Let's take a look at the objects in the model articles themselves.

Article III 2 clearly states that the methods or activities used to attain the ob-

jects listed in Article III 1 are ineffective if they are contrary to the statutes or common law relating to charities. That statement must be included in the incorporating document of every charity that wishes to incorporate under the federal jurisdiction. Why? Because the federal government knows that the power and jurisdiction over charitable property and charitable entities are by the *Constitution Act, 1867* assigned to the provinces.

So, if I understand the situation correctly, legal council advised the board of trustees, CRCNA-Canada, to circumvent the common law in an area of provincial jurisdiction by incorporating under a federal statute. This appears to be a rather questionable approach for a church to take.

Application of common law

It appears from Englehard's article that ministers serving on the board of directors is an issue only in Ontario because of the position taken by "The Public Guardian and Trustee" (PGT). This also is naive and ill-informed. The common law of trusts applies in all the common law provinces of Canada. Only where a province specifically legislates that a practice otherwise prohibited by common law is legal can the common law be superseded.

None of the common law provinces in Canada have passed legislation permitting employees (including ministers) to serve on the board of directors of a charity. CCCC was heavily involved with the office of the PGT to develop regulations that would permit such a practice in limited

circumstances. After a number of years, the government abandoned the proposed regulations because they would also permit paid professionals such as lawyers to serve on the board of directors. Consequently, the situation in Ontario is still the same as in the other provinces. Legally, ministers may not serve on the board of directors in any common law province in Canada.

A careful reading of the excerpts from the August 27, 2001 legal opinion quoted by Englehard shows that the author of that legal opinion (Mr. Posthumus?) did not contradict van der Woerd. Certainly, Posthumus's letter in the same issue of CC appears to acknowledge the legal accuracy of van der Woerd's position. The legal opinion and Posthumus deal only with the *enforcement* issue. Is that what the church should be about; to see how far it can go before the law is enforced?

No need to break the law

There is no need to break the law. If a local church believes that the minister should be a member of the board of directors, there is a legal avenue available to obtain permission via application to the court. Only provincial legislatures or the courts have the power to permit practices that are otherwise prohibited by common law. Churches, of all institutions, should comply with the law unless the law is clearly contrary to scripture (not the confessions or the *Church Order* which are fallible).

In my book *Financial Issues for Churches*, available from CCCC (www.cccc.org), I deal with trust issues in more detail. There, I make the case that ministers should not be asked to be members of the board of directors because it places them in conflict situations beyond salary issues.

The most dangerous argument

Posthumus also advanced the concept that the church is a "private charity." He suggests that a church may be exempt from the law that applies to charities raising funds from the general public. This is likely the most dangerous argument advanced in the discussion to date.

There are law professors who argue that churches have more similarities to "private clubs" than to true charities. These academics state that charities must exist exclusively for the benefit of the public, but that churches exist primarily for the benefit of their members. If that concept takes root, these same academics will

argue that it is contrary to the freedom of religion principle of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to permit churches to issue charitable donation receipts. Churches should avoid advancing arguments that could be interpreted as supporting such a proposition. Charity law does not recognize or, in my view, allow for such a distinction. The advancement of religion has a long history of being accepted as charitable at law because promoting religion is, without the need to prove it, a public benefit.

Wishful speculation

Posthumus also stated that he knows of no statute law or common law principle clearly stating that churches have no discretion in this matter. There may not be a case exactly on point, although at least one — *Faith Havens* — came very close. However, there are cases in Canada where churches and other religious organizations have been held to the same common law principles that apply to all charities. It is wishful speculation to suggest that in this instance it might be different.

To make use of a doubtful mechanism in an attempt to circumvent the common law and to argue that we should not be concerned because the law has not been enforced to date is dangerous. Any member of the public, including a former church member, can present allegations to the attorney general of any common law province. When that happens, the attorney general's office is duty bound to investigate the allegation. The church will never know its accuser. It may be that the authorities will not be diligent in carrying out their policing duty. But, since when does the church teach that we obey the law only when there is a chance that we may get caught? Therefore, it is my conclusion that a church that heeds van der Woerd's advice is much more prudent than one that follows the advice given by Englehard and Posthumus.

The Bible and the confessions teach us to obey the law. Even if we are not convinced of the correctness of van der Woerd's advice, let's err on the side of caution. That is especially important if the name of the church, the Christian community as a whole and the name of our Lord could potentially come into disrepute because we "breached the law."

Dick L. Kranendonk is a senior employee of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, based in Elmira, Ont.

Opinion/Psychology

Role of religion in society debated

... continued from page 5

relied upon to be a humanizing force in society.

This view was a clever evasion of the charge of "Islamophobia." After all, newspapers were in a quandary — they could not allow their writers to appear to condemn Islam, since that would be politically incorrect. So many of their commentators solved the problem by generalizing the target and condemning all religions as equally harmful.

Despising all religions equally

Someone who despises religion cannot be accused of bias against Muslims because he despises all religious people equally. Islam just happened to be the particular culprit this time around. But it could just as easily have been a Jewish or Christian extremist, who have in the past shown the same mindless disregard for human life. For this group then, the cause of the

Sept. 11 tragedy was religion. The solution? To have less of it!

Normally a commentator on economics, the *London Times'* Anatole Kaletsky wrote just after Christmas, "First and foremost, Sept. 11 and the subsequent rout of the Taliban reminded us that religion should have no place in modern politics and diplomacy."

Only partly true

Despite the atheistic agenda, these writers were right to attribute causality to religion in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. When President George W. Bush declared to both houses of the U.S. Congress on Sept. 21, "I say to our Arab and Muslim friends, neither you nor Islam is responsible for this," the implication that the crime was committed by pure fanaticism in defiance of the true tenets of Islam was only partly true.

The fact is that the suicide bombers only did what they did because of their religion.

Mohammed Atta, one of the ring-leaders of the hijackers, exhorted his colleagues to read the Koran the night before the attacks in order to strengthen their determination. Religion — however distorted — was a prime causal factor in the attacks. These men were not mere psychopaths, or if they were, their religion was implicated in their psychosis.

But the view that all religions are therefore breeding grounds for fanatics and that the world has to be rid of religion is a nonsensical analysis. The view utterly fails to distinguish good religion from bad religion. To equate religious belief with unstable fanaticism is patently foolish.

History clearly shows the positive value of religion. In a letter to the columnist Anatole Kaletsky, a reader mildly pointed out, "The Protestant Christian doctrine of church and state has led to the modern concept of toleration."

Group 2: Religion good, fanatics bad

The second group consisted of politicians and many religious leaders. Again, political correctness somewhat forced their hand.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair constantly told the public, "Islam is a religion of peace." What else was he to say in order to prevent hate crimes against the Islamic community? The assumption put out was that all religions are essentially good and peace loving, and it was fanaticism — not religion — that was responsible for the attacks. One cannot hold an entire religion responsible for the eccentric interpretations of a few hate-filled members.

Some religious leaders put out a more nuanced expression of this view. New York Rabbi Boteach told CNN's *Faith and Conflict*, "The real problem is not religion, but when a religion claims a monopoly of the way to God — that's what leads to conflict and it has no place in a pluralistic society."

Other journalists such as Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* placed the blame not on religion itself, but squarely on the lack of democracy in Islamic countries as the cause of fanaticism.

Again the view has some merit. Most Muslims were indeed appalled at the abuse of their religion to justify such a crime. By now we have all become familiar with the Koran's Sura 5:35, which condemns violence and slaughter. But the view is a flawed analysis nevertheless. As we have seen, it fails to understand that the terrorists were religiously motivated.

Also, it will not do to claim that all religions are equally peaceful — some are a lot more aggressive than others. The fact is that the scriptures of the major religions have a lot to say about violence. Past generations of great leaders — including Martin Luther and John Calvin — have justified the use of force against the enemies of God. Even the sura cited above in the Koran, which unequivocally condemns violence, is immediately followed by the much more threatening, "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and his messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides."

Just because presidents and prime ministers, in order to encourage social peace, say that Islam is a religion of peace, does not change the unpleasant fact that in

many places in the world — Indonesia and the Sudan today — Islam is also a religion of war.

Fatally flawed views

Both views, then, are fatally flawed in their analysis and, consequently, in their solution. Both conspicuously fail to issue invitations to religion to play a part in the solution.

The first group believes that minimizing the role religion plays in public life will smooth world affairs. Religion is banished to the private sphere and frowned on even there.

The second group, while accepting that religion is positive, still does not issue an invitation to religion to be part of the solution. The logic reveals why. If fanaticism — caused by lack of democracy, poverty, unemployment — is really the problem, then the answer to removing this kind of fanaticism is to introduce the political and economic changes that will reduce it. Religion is not invited to be part of the solution because it has been reduced to a consequence, not a cause, of peace and change.

Democracy in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia is the solution; military intelligence operations and better technology become the main bulwarks against religiously motivated terrorism. It is felt that only politicians and their states — not religious leaders and their religions — can make the world safe again.

Sadly then, secular myopia is alive and well among these new experts. Religion is still not a prime factor in making peace and effecting change.

As a pre-Sept. 11 religious liberty specialist, the most frightening thing that happened to me in 2001 was reading a line in an article written by Robert Seiple, America's first Ambassador for Religious Liberty. During his 25-month stint in the U.S. State Department, he attended regularly for a year the Monday morning meeting for all the assistant secretaries of state. Not once, said Seiple, was he ever asked a question about religious freedom!

The culture of disinterest is still at large. Seiple wrote, "Certainly, religious freedom indirectly came up in the context of disasters such as Afghanistan or Sudan, but the issue was never brought up in its own right — and this during an administration that cared deeply for human rights."

Secular myopia will take a lot to "cure." The events of Sept. 11 have left unaffected people's attitudes toward religion and peaceful change.

Where can we turn for help?

"Nobody knows how sick we are..."

Suicide note left behind by Belva Baulne

"Belva's sunny smile lights up the picture. As always for the church Christmas banquet her hair is coiffed, her outfit perfect. From behind his trademark grey bushy beard, Maurice smiles shyly, as was his way." *The Province*, January 20, 2000, describing the last photograph taken of Maurice and Belva Baulne

Faith in God seemed not to be enough to keep Maurice and Belva Baulne from taking their own lives as well as the life of their disabled son. At the funeral, the pastor encouraged the mourners not to put their hope in institutions, governments, family or community. Ultimately, he said, they will fail us at times. I pondered the tragic deaths and the subsequent words of the pastor and wondered — if faith is not enough and the community around us cannot be there to help when we are in the abyss of despair where does that leave us?

Healthy self-sufficiency?

We believe one of the characteristics of healthy adulthood is involvement in daily work. This work in turn gives us the monetary resources to meet the needs of our families. When illness or disability strikes, however, and the resources are not forthcoming, should we not be able to turn somewhere and ask for assistance for a time?

Yet, asking for help in a country that prides itself on being built by seemingly self-sufficient pioneers is not easy. While applying for government assistance has become reasonably acceptable, approaching family, friends or church deacons can be painfully humiliating. Our self-respect plummets and we chastise ourselves for

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

not living up to our own, as well as society's expectations.

The tough upper lip syndrome may be healthy when swinging axes in the forest, but it becomes a different story when it is wound around our emotional life. How do we process disappointments when they are piled one on top of another? How do we get our bearing when much in life seems skewed and the future looks bleak? How do we get back on track so we can see the light at the end of the tunnel? How do we keep on trusting God when He seems so stern and silent? Life is not fair and some people seem to have more sorrow than they deserve.

Let others know and ask for help

Yes, people will fail us at times. That is why we need to be surrounded by a group of supportive people. If one person cannot help us, we need to approach someone else. God never intended us to live like hermits or as islands all to ourselves. When depression strikes and we cannot pray — others can pray for us. When we cannot make decisions because we have lost our way — others can encourage us. When winter evenings are long and lonely — others can sit with us. So, when in the abyss of despair — let others know and ask for help. It may be hard, but contrary to popular opinion — it is a sign of courage and inner strength!



Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Book Review/News

Book analyzes tumultuous history, current state of Islam

In the Shadow of the Prophet: The Struggle for the Soul of Islam

By Milton Viorst

Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 2001, 355 pp. \$25.95.

Reviewed by Harry Antonides

The murder of thousands of innocent victims on September 11 has forced on our agenda troubling questions about the nature of Islam. We knew that Islam is making inroads into Western Europe and North America in large numbers, and that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. We also had some inkling that Muslims have rather odd customs pertaining to their diets and religious duties, but for the most part we paid little heed.

What motivated Sept. 11 hijackers?

Besides, we have been inundated with the idea that all cultures are really the same. So, why should we worry? Our political leaders never tire of boasting that Canada is a great multicultural showcase

This is a fascinating contribution to a much-needed reflection on the meaning of Islam. Viorst is right in saying that the West can no longer ignore the ideas that drive the Arab world

where all religions and cultures can find a home. Toleration is the new credo that brooks no dissenters. But the September 11 atrocities have shaken our complacency. What motivated these hijackers to hate and kill in the name of Allah? Although America — the “Great Satan” — was the target this time, the perpetrators made it clear that they were really attacking all that the democratic West represents.

The debate about the role of Islam in the September 11 attacks continues. One explanation is that the hijackers are part of a small coterie of Muslims who are falsely using the Koran as cover. President Bush has gone out of his way to insist that Islam is not the enemy. On the contrary, Osama bin Laden and his co-conspirators have hijacked Islam for their evil purposes. They are renegades who in no way represent the religion they profess.

Who is right?

But others disagree; they are convinced that bin Laden and his followers are inspired by a view of Islam that has a very long tradition and poses a serious and ongoing

threat to all free nations. Who is right?

The answer to that question is of great importance for at least two reasons. The shocking attacks on two prominent symbols of American power, in which thousands of innocent citizens were murdered, are aimed at the entire civilized world. Further, the large influx of millions of Muslims into North America and Europe — including a very determined nucleus of immigrants who consider it their religious duty to replace Western democratic institutions with the rule of Islam — is deeply unsettling.

Digging deeper into Arab world

Milton Viorst is an American journalist who has traveled widely in the Middle East. In an earlier book, *Sandcastles*, he focused on the sorry state of the conditions in the Middle Eastern countries. In *In the Shadow of the Prophet* digs deeper because Viorst realizes that we cannot understand the Arab world without insight into the religious teachings that undergird it.

This is not a prescriptive book, but an exploration into what has gone wrong “after a dazzling beginning” with the Arab nations. The author does not accept the Arab claim that all would be well if the West would not have dom-

inated them. Neither is he an antagonist, but he writes that after a quarter century of study he has “acquired a fondness for the Arabs and an esteem for their civilization.”

The spread of Islam

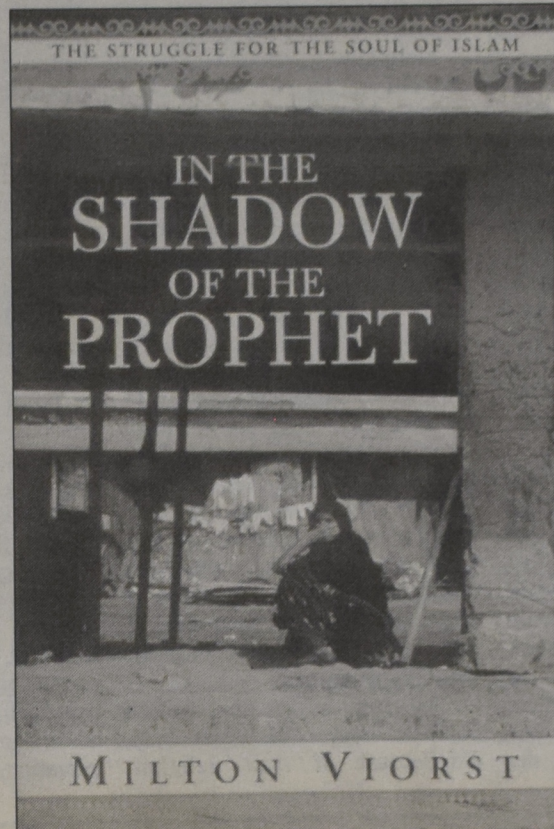
Viorst provides an overview of the historic struggle of the followers of Mohammed, who was born in Mecca about 570. By the time of his death in 632, Islam, by conquest and conversion, had a firm foothold. In the next 100 years, Islam spread across the entire Arab world and beyond, reaching into Spain, North Africa, Persia and even India. Then followed a long period of cultural and scientific advancement, but since the Middle Ages, Islam has declined in vigor and stature. Presently all countries dominated by radical Islam are impoverished, dictatorships despite the fact that some of them are rich in resources.

Throughout its entire history, a tug of war has existed in Islam between those who want to interpret the Koran strictly (fundamentalists) and those who insist that the Koran must be applied in light of changing circumstances (modernists). A strict application of the Koran demands that economics, politics, education, and every other aspect of life are governed by the teachings of the Koran (sharia) as interpreted by the religious teachers. The resulting one-party state has given rise to the worst kind of oppression and brutality, such as cutting off hands and feet for theft, the death penalty for apostasy, and stoning to death for adultery.

Prepared to live in peace

In contrast, there are others who want to be loyal Muslims but are convinced that they have to interpret the Koran in ways that are open to its surroundings and to other than Islamic sources of knowledge. They are prepared to adjust to the demands of a modern democracy and live in peace with non-Muslims.

The conflict between these two opposing ways of reading the Koran lies at the



root of all the internal and external struggles of Islam. It has led to violent uprisings, wars, assassinations, suppression of non-Muslims, and in the last few decades, terrorists attacks on the West.

In the Shadow of the Prophet is an excellent introduction to the tumultuous history and current state of Islam. It is a religion that has inspired a sizeable faction of its adherents to believe that to die in the battle against the “great Satan” and what it represents is an honorable and sacred duty.

Based on interviews with key players

A distinguishing feature of this book is that it is based on detailed interviews with numerous major players in the struggle between the Islamic fundamentalists and the modernists. It includes a chapter about Mohammed and the Book, the application of Islamic law (sharia), the violent struggles between the two major Islamic

factions in Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Iran, France’s way of coping with the large influx of Muslims — now ten per cent of the French population. It is not a pretty picture, and much blood has flowed.

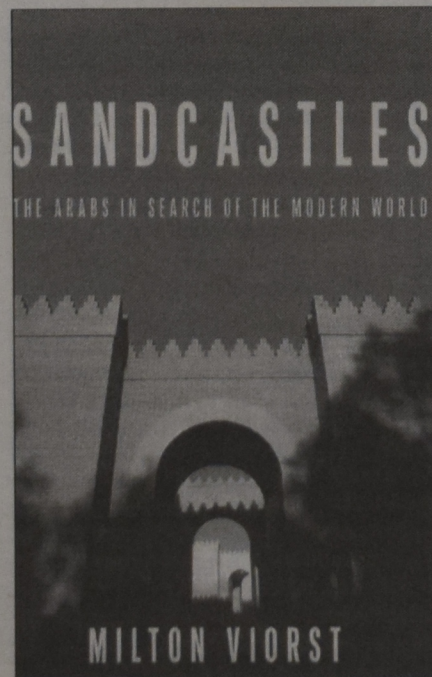
The most hopeful (concluding) chapter describes the role of the late King Hussein of Jordan whose view of Islam is far removed from the fatwa-yielding ayatollahs. In a lengthy interview with the author, the King argued for a form of pluralism that safeguards the freedom of all citizens. He rejected the isolationism that is responsible for the backwardness and poverty afflicting millions in Islamic countries. Whether he was realistic in advocating such a sanitized version of Islam remains to be seen, but his views

are a welcome alternative to those who can see only evil in Western democracies.

This is a fascinating contribution to a much-needed reflection on the meaning of Islam. Viorst is right in saying that the West can no longer ignore the ideas that drive the Arab world: “Whoever wins the factional struggle within Islam will acquire a great prize. At the least, the winner will determine the shape that relations take, in the short term and the long, between the Islamic world and the West.”

Islam has posed a serious challenge to Christians for almost 14 centuries. But no one can dispute that this is now particularly urgent for us Christians. The question is whether we are well prepared for this demanding challenge. I am not so sure. What do you think?

Harry Antonides is a retired member of the Christian Labour Association of Canada and lives in Willowdale, Ont.



In an earlier book, Sandcastles, Viorst focused on the sorry state of the conditions in the Middle Eastern countries.

Muslim-Christian conflict continues in Moluccas

JAKARTA, Indonesia (EP) — Militant gunmen attacked Rutong, a Christian village in Indonesia’s Molucca islands, on Jan. 13. They were forced away when men and police fought back. Fighting between Christians and Muslims in the region has continued since 1999, causing the death of hundreds and the evacuation of thou-

sands more. In the area around the city of Poso, Sulawesi, more than 1,000 people have died in the fighting. Two villagers were wounded in the most recent attack, and one of the gunmen was killed, reports Barnabas Fund. Despite this recent attack, Indonesian officials say the region has been relatively quiet since mid-December.

Development News

Calgary young people bring everlasting gift to Mexican natives

Gordon Legge

SAN IL DEFANSO, Mexico — Calgary high school student Deanne Poschwatta spent last Dec. 10 distributing Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts to several hundred indigenous Otomi children outside this tiny Mexican village. A few hours later Poschwatta sat at a table in a cavernous community warehouse where she ate and slept, recording her thoughts in a trip diary.

"I realized that we Canadians could not do much for them, for these children," she wrote reflecting on her day.

The children will grow up and we will probably never see the students again, wrote Poschwatta, 16, a Grade 12 student at Calgary's Lord Beaverbrook High School and a member of Pavilion of Hope church.

designed for youth who are on the verge of making important life decisions, such as whether they want to go into missions or international development work.

Long-term impact

Only time will determine the extent to which the program achieved its objectives. YBB organizer Karen Copithorne hopes it will have an impact on its participants on four levels:

- That each person developed a fuller understanding of what it means to be Christian;
- That they developed a tenderness for international missions and people living in different parts of the world; a compassion that, in turn, will be passed along to their children;
- That they formed friendships that will endure and deepen and

the call for applicants across the country through an extensive church network across Canada.

As the applications began arriving and the selection process began, Copithorne set up a website on Microsoft.Net (MSN) so that participants could get to know each other, share thoughts, feelings and prayer requests, and ask questions.

In addition, each applicant received a 66-page preparation guide, written by Copithorne, filled with sound advice, Scripture references, mini-biographies of famous missionaries and a checklist of things to do in readiness for the trip.

On Dec. 6, participants from eastern Canada gathered in Kitchener while those from western Canada gathered in Calgary.

How to avoid embarrassment

Jorge Aviles, manager of international project for Operation Christmas Child, provided some informal tips about how to avoid embarrassment and leave a favorable impression — everything from using the toilets ("Put the toilet paper in the basket.") to how to dress ("No tight pants. Yes, it will only offend people.").

"My challenge to you is to look beyond these differences and look at the person inside," said Aviles, an Argentine native and former corporate executive. "It will enrich your life. Make sure you allow that to happen."

The day before their departure, they spent the morning checking shoebox gifts at the Samaritan's Purse warehouse in southeast Calgary. Then they spent the afternoon sorting food at the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank.

That evening, they learned how to make balloon toys like dogs, teddy bears and funny hats from master magician Gary Edwards, a Grade 6 teacher at W.O. Mitchell school. "It's pretty cool," said Edwards. "It's a neat way to share the Gospel."

At 6:45 a.m. the next morning, the students, their chaperones and a couple of Samaritan's Purse staffers boarded a plane for Mexico City. There, they assembled with the group from the East and together boarded a bus for a three-hour bus ride to Queretaro, northwest of Mexico City.

A pre-Aztec settlement, it was conquered by the Spanish in 1531. Today the city of 1.1 million still retains its Spanish colonial flavor.

Late on Dec. 8th, they arrived at Circulo Biblico, an evangelical Christian church that has been



GORDON LEGGE PHOTOS

Deanne Poschwatta, 16, a Grade 12 student at Lord Beaverbrook High School in Calgary, plays with Jose Havrer, a boy in San Il Defanso.

working with the Otomi for the past three years.

Enthusiastic Mexican welcome

After an enthusiastic Mexican welcome, the students were dispatched to spend the night billeted with a Mexican family.

The next day, against a backdrop of Mexican and Canadian flags, they were welcomed again with music and laughter at a rousing morning church service.

Then Pastor Eduardo "Lalo" Paulin, who is bilingual, talked to them about what was to come. "Many of you are tired. You will have to sleep on the floor and eat food you are unaccustomed to. You will have difficulty communicating with people. You will have to walk a little ways to the bathroom and line up for a shower. You will carry many things. You'll be sunburned and thirsty."

Then Paulin talked about how God is a God of purpose. For many of the children, it would be their first, and perhaps only gift in their lives. He talked about the thousands of breakfasts that would be distributed by them; the dozens of blankets that would be given to seniors; the five wheelchairs that would be donated to physically-disabled community members; the hundreds of packages of diaper fabrics for mothers with infant children; and the scores of people who would be seen by the two doctors and a nurse (and a Mexican optometrist) also along on the trip.

An eternal project

"It's an eternal project in God's mind," Paulin said. While he can visit a few hundred families each month, the shoebox gifts will open the doors to thousands of souls, he observed.

Paulin explained how there are no Otomi pastors. Only 1.1 per cent of the Otomi are evangelical Christians.

Oppressed and ignored

"They have been cursed, oppressed, ignored. They have a mixture of religion and paganism. They are in spiritual misery."

The pastor talked about the impoverishment and malnourishment among the Otomi. Queretaro state has the highest number of unwed mothers in Mexico. Children as young as 13 have one or two children; by late teens, some girls have four and five children, he said.

Don't be fearful or ashamed, he said. "God has prepared all this to bless us and bless other people through us. Show them the love of God through your eyes, your smile, your hands."

Finally, the students were taught how to say "God Bless You" in Spanish (*Dios Te Bendiga*) after they handed out each gift.

After a lavish, home-cooked Mexican potluck buffet, the students began their stay by visiting the Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) orphanage.

Established in 1994 by Darrell and Elena Hilbrands, it has about 80 children aged two to 18 (see related page 1 story). They are channeled to the orphanage by Mexican social services after being either abused or abandoned by their families.

Towards the end of their stay, the students were able to spend a few hours helping out with the construction of a new orphanage on the outskirts of the Queretaro.

Following their visit to the orphanage, the tour headed off to San Il Defanso, a small village southeast of Queretaro where they booked into a brand new community warehouse, their base of operations for the next five days.

Lined up like sardines

There 49 teenaged girls and women spread their sleeping bags across the concrete floor like a giant slumber party while 11 men

See CALGARY page 14...



Youth Beyond Borders co-ordinator Karen Copithorne, shown here with a Mexican child, hopes the young Canadians who participated in this program will always remember the people in developing countries.

Then she added, "That is why it is so important that we lend a hand in providing them with a gift that is everlasting. It is a gift that they can take with them forever and have in times of trouble and adversity — the precious gift of Jesus Christ and the love he has for us."

Poschwatta is one of nine young people from the Calgary area who participated in Youth Beyond Borders, a pilot program sponsored by Calgary-based Samaritan's Purse — Canada.

In the program, a total of 49 young Canadians aged 16 to 22, along with 13 adults, from Victoria to St. John's spent Dec. 8th to 16th in central, rural Mexico.

There, they distributed thousands of shoebox gifts, along with a variety of humanitarian assistance, to the indigenous Otomi people living in the region around San Il Defanso. Historically, Mexico's indigenous peoples have been neglected and marginalized.

Youth Beyond Borders (YBB) is a pilot program especially

encourage them throughout their lives;

- That there is a better understanding of the relationship between the Christian church and international relief organizations such as Samaritan's Purse.

Sean Campbell, executive director of Samaritan's Purse — Canada, first conceived of the idea early last year. He wanted to develop a program wherein youth from different parts of the world would be brought together for a banner event. It was eventually scaled back to encompass only Canada.

Largest group ever

Still it was a massive undertaking, turning it into the largest group Samaritan's Purse has ever led on a mission trip.

Last spring, Copithorne, who had recently returned from a short-term mission trip to Vietnam and assigned to donor development, was handed the project.

Last June, she began putting out

Development News/Family

Calgary youth serve and learn in Mexico

... continued from page 13

lined up like sardines in a smaller room upstairs. The medical party comprising a doctor and nurse (husband and wife) team and a second doctor found their own separate corners in which to rest their bodies.

Each morning, around 9:30 a.m., following devotions and breakfast, the troupe climbed on a bus for an hour's drive to a small Otomi village in the arid, mountainous region. Monday was La Soledad (the Lonely); Tuesday, El Lindero (The Limit); Wednesday, San Il Defanso; and Thursday, Santiago Mezquititlan.

At each stop, the crowds grew larger. Unlike the beachside tourist destinations frequented each winter by Canadians, this was the real Mexico of burros carrying their burdens and corn drying atop corrugated rooftops.

By the time they arrived at their destination, hundreds of children had been sitting on the ground since 9 a.m. waiting patiently for their Canadian visitors. Upon arrival, the students quickly began unloading a truck brimming with milk, bananas and sugared cereal.

They scooped, poured and chopped the mixture into large blue plastic cups and then carried them in trays, a dozen at a time, to the waiting crowds.

Meanwhile, Quebec singer Tabitha Lemaire entertained them with a selection of soaring contemporary Christian songs. After that, a Mexican clown troupe took the stage to fill the fields, the size of McMahon stadium, with gales of laughter.

After the breakfast had been distributed to young and old alike, blankets, diaper fabric and a wheelchair were dispatched while the medical team dispensed advice and prescription medicines in a nearby tent.

Usually by 1 p.m., it was time to distribute the shoebox gifts, along with a cartoon booklet in Spanish telling the Christmas story.

Rather than rip into the gaily-wrapped presents like their Canadian brothers and sisters might have, the children sat patiently till all were handed out. As they waited, gusts of fine, light Mexican dust swept across the sun-scorched fields while the melody, *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*, blared from speakers near the stage.

Their first gift

Then, in unison, the children raised the boxes high over their

heads for all to see and photograph before finally tearing into them en masse. Most of the children had never received a gift in their lives. It was like a thousand Christmas mornings all bunched together.

As the children opened their boxes, the Canadian students threaded their way through the children and helped them explore their treasures.

As well, they handed out vast quantities of stuffed toys. By the time they wrapped up on Thursday, they had distributed 7,750 shoebox gifts; 800 packages of diaper cloth; 2,000 stuffed animals; 8,900 breakfasts and attended to 356 people at the daily clinics.

As the pastor had predicted, the Canadians worked hard. Some succumbed to serious sunburn. Others ended up with upset stomachs.

They also went sightseeing. Many walked through the village where they stayed, stopping long to see the cramped shacks where the Mexicans live. One night they traipsed through fields by flashlight to a circle of trees and cacti where they sang contemporary Christian music around a moonlit bonfire.

They swam at the bottom of the Acapulco Falls, a huge waterfall resembling the fabled cliffs of Acapulco. On the final day of distribution, the Canadians and Mexican church workers dined together on roast lamb and tortillas in an open field overlooking a river valley fringed with cacti and tall grass.

Taking home memories

Each student went home with a pocketful of highlights. Laura Galbraith, 17, a Grade 12 student at Waterloo Collegiate Institute in Waterloo, remembers watching one little girl in San Il Defanso open her shoebox gift. In it she found a photo of the family who sent it. On the back was everyone's name, including a horse named Bandit. "She was so cute," says Galbraith, a member of Trinity Evangelical Missionary Church. "She just held the picture. She didn't care about anything else in the box."

Nothing prepared the students for the level of gratitude they experienced daily from the people.

A million thanks

On the final night of their stay in San Il Defanso, community leader Alicia Ventura Nicolas, who had helped prepare their meals, delivered an impromptu

Moving Mother (part 2)

The October sky is overcast and the dampness in the air foreshadows still drearier days to come. I look around the stuffy waiting room and spot a single available chair. It's already been a long day. I stare out the window at the playground across the street. My thoughts wander back to the days when my mother and I used to sit on those park benches for whole afternoons. We'd chat while my three children scampered from the swing sets to the slides to the merry-go-round, and back again. On hot summer days we'd take them to the beach a few blocks away. In the fall, they would frolic in piles of leaves on my mother's lawn. Everything in its season.

My mother's voice brings me back to the here and now. She shuffles down the corridor in her peculiar arthritic style, telling the nurse beside her that this week she's moving out of her little house and into a senior's apartment. It came as quite a shock, she explains, when they called after only four weeks. When she put her name on the waiting list they said it would be at least four to six months.

'Why should I move out?'

Back home, she stretches out on the sofa. I continue wrapping dishes in newspaper and stuffing them into boxes. With heavy eyelids, she apologizes for not having the energy to help. It's okay; I know she needs a rest. The once bright blue eyes are nearly closed and she murmurs, "What's wrong with this little house anyway? Why should I move out?" I assure her it's her choice. She could just stay on the waiting list; but winter is coming on after all. She makes no argument now. Her chest gently rises and falls and her breathing is deep. I stack up more boxes and decide to take on the kitchen cupboards next.

Later, we order pizza for supper. She restlessly scans the disarray surrounding us while she eats. By bedtime, nearly everything is packed and ready to go. Ma needs an extra pain pill. In the darkness, she tells me this place has been home for 21 years. I tell her she's going to a safer place, with lots of people her age and no stairs to worry about. I point out that her friend Julius won't be able to run errands and drive her around forever. Really, I'm amazed at her willingness to move; especially knowing my own aversion to change is directly inherited from my mother.

I pray things will go well, not only for moving day but for the time ahead.

November 1 is warm and sunny, a welcome surprise after the cold wet days of October. My brother and his wife arrive with a pickup truck and trailer. A little later, Jack shows up. Mother tries to stay out of the way while her world is carted out the door and loaded into the waiting vehicles. The only crisis arises when her cat goes momentarily missing in action. We soon relocate her in the basement and all is well.

speech, filled with sobs of joy. Nicolas thanked the students over and over for their help.

"This community has never received this kind of help," she cried. "I thank you a million times."

The community will never forget what the Canadians brought to

them, she said.

"We hope this won't be the first and last time you visit us. You'll always be welcome here. This is your home."

Then after dinner, several community officials, including the mayor and police chief, came in

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

By noon the main floor is empty. We're eating lunch in a local restaurant when my mother tells the server she's being forced to move by her children. I'm thinking aloud and the words spill out, "As if... anyone could ever tell you what to do!" In my mind I'm hoping this is true. I don't want to force my mother into such a big decision. Then I remind her that she's fallen 19 times in the past year. Moving is a good choice.

God will help her adjust

Ma spends the afternoon on the couch in the basement of her house with the radio and her cat for company. By the time we bring her to the apartment that evening, it's already starting to look like a home. She doesn't notice the cozy way the living room has been arranged, or how her bedroom looks like an upscale hotel room. All she sees is the good china spread all over the dining room table and mountains of boxes yet to be emptied.

I unpack boxes that night until she begs me to stop. When we finally collapse into bed, she sleeps right away. I am exhausted, but cannot sleep. I pray that God will help her to adjust.

I marvel at God's providence.

A couple of days later, I have to leave. Everything has been neatly arranged and we've practised the elevator a few times. Jack tells me the only way she'll figure it all out is on her own. I know he's right. That night, Ma calls me at home. Her friend Julius has cancer. The doctor told him he won't live more than six months. I marvel at God's providence.

Each time I see my mother over the next few weeks she's becoming more and more comfortable. She goes down for coffee klatch every morning at 10. She has supper in the dining room a couple of times a week. She's getting to know her neighbors. By mid-December, she wants to put up Christmas decorations. They haven't been out of the box for almost ten years. Jack calls it geriatric peer pressure. Everyone is decorating for Christmas. When Julius dies on New Year's Eve, she is sad, but not frightened.

A few weeks into January, I bring my mother-in-law down for a visit. Ma is delighted to see her. She tells my mother what a lovely place she has. Ma replies, "I like it here. No complaints." Sweeter words have never been spoken. Everything in its season.



Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.

and presented each member of the Canadian mission with a gold medal.

On the sash were the words, "Gracias, Amealco, Mexico, Dec. 2001." Each victory medal was emblazoned with the numeral 1.

Dios Te Bendiga.

Science & Ethics

Human cloning hot topic at campus discussion

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — When a controversial topic like human cloning is up for public discussion, you can count on a good turnout and some difficult questions. That's what happened in mid-January in St. Catharines, when Brock University's Campus Ministries presented an interdisciplinary panel discussion about human cloning, and 200 students and community members showed up.

A panel of six — including Christian Reformed Campus Chaplain Peter Schuurman, several science professors and one professor of philosophy — discussed different aspects of human cloning. Schuurman explained, "Twenty-three countries have banned human cloning. Why? I, with them, am deeply concerned about the attitudes, dreams, and unforeseen consequences that come with the field of bio-genetics, and today, the issue of commercialized human cloning. I think a useful analogy is the drama of atomic research in the last century: a profoundly powerful science with social, political and environmental consequences that... go on pretty much forever."

Technology not neutral

"Technology is not neutral, and neither is it simply a tool," said Schuurman. "It is a cultural force in a political/economic context and thus a moral endeavor ... that ushers in new worlds and precludes others, is advantageous to some groups of people and harmful to others."

"I do believe that God encourages us to scientifically explore and map the creation, and that he invites us to 'think his thoughts after him,' but the forces of the market and human ambition need to be checked.... Wisdom knows limits."

The idea of human cloning is "cold, antiseptic, dehumanizing," asserted Schuurman.

"Biblical tradition prescribes the role of the steward for humanity.... God has entrusted us, the most powerful species on the planet, to be responsible with that which is not ours to own. It is our duty, whether we recognize it or not, to care for the natural world, from the sky above to the cell below, as best as we are able."

"There is much mention of how genetic manipulation is 'playing God' — an ominous but ambiguous accusation. The theology of stewardship actually suggests that God asks us to play his part, to act as his vice-regents as it were, in partnership with him.... So the



question is not whether genetic manipulation is playing God or not, but rather, what sort of God are we playing, what sort of God are we imitating, following, fashioning ourselves in the image of? Our concern, then, would not be that we play the true, good God who heals and has a special concern for the weak and the poor, but that we play a despotic or irresponsible god."

Life at weakest state

"This is a real possibility with cloning, because we are dealing with human life at its weakest and most vulnerable state, the embryonic state. And if religious traditions are correct in believing that human beings are more than the sum of their parts — that they have a divine image, a soul that makes them more than just a collection of tissue, then experimenting, engineering, and destroying embryonic human life is a serious moral offense," Schuurman contended.

"Cloning is viscerally repugnant to many because the idea of designing and manufacturing human beings in a lab may grant fame and fortune to some bio-tech company, but its utilitarian ethic subverts something intrinsically sacred, and by that I mean something mysterious, something more fully human about ourselves that cannot be measured or 'microscoped.' There is something warmer, something more loving and human in a child that is begotten out of the trothed passion of a mother and father committed to its upbringing, and its unambiguous identity as a person in a line of human beings stretching back in history." One problem with human cloning is the "ambiguous parentage" of clones. "How does [a clone] relate to his dad-brother or sister-mother?" he asked.

"The question today is not about the techniques and ethics of

cloning, but more fundamentally about what kind of society we want to become. I think this research is like atomic science. It's unnecessary, expensive, highly volatile, and has a tremendous possibility for abuse by the military ... and corporate sectors, further accelerating us away from high-touch towards a dehumanized high-tech society. If we are trustees of the creation, or ... if we are to be responsible to subsequent generations, let's make love, not clones," he concluded.

Moral issues

George Nathan, a professor of philosophy at Brock, examined the moral issues of cloning. "There's an intimate connection between moral and legal issues," explained Nathan. He defined morals as "accepted rules governing the behaviors of members of a community. Rights and duties come out of moral rules." Nathan outlined three basic moral rules as being:

- avoid harm;
- don't interfere with freedom;
- respect the moral status or standing of beings, acknowledging that rules 1 and 2 apply to them.

Nathan's view is that "concerns about violations of Rule 3 are behind all controversial moral issues, e.g. abortion, euthanasia and cloning.... Rule 3 delineates the difference between things and non-things. This is a fundamental division in our society."

"Things" may be experimented with, bought and sold, he suggested, but non-things cannot be. But one big question remains: "Are sperm, eggs, embryos things or non-things?" asked Nathan. "We are now called to decide this fundamental question."

But when asked, in the question and answer period, whether he was for or against human cloning research, Nathan gave an ambiguous reply.



Brock University panelists engage in a discussion: from left, Robert Carlone, Adonis Skandalis, Syd Segalowitz, Miriam Richards, Peter Schuurman, George Nathan.

Xeroxing people

Biology professor Miriam Richards explored the question of whether or not humans can be "biologically Xeroxed" through cloning. Looking at what makes a person an individual, Richards explained that "humans are products of both nature and nurture." Environment can make a difference in how a person turns out: for instance, which society one grows up in, how one's parents treat a child, and the food a child eats.

Examining genetics, Richards noted that identical twins should be identical, "but they aren't the same." She gave the example of one twin who was left-handed and his twin brother who was right-handed. Identical twins come from the same egg and sperm, same mother and same family environment. But cloned humans would turn out differently from their parent/donor because they would have different mothers, for instance.

Psychology professor Syd Segalowitz also compared clones with twins, focusing on the development of the brain. When a human egg is first fertilized, "the brain is not present in the single cell," he pointed out. The brain takes some time to develop during a pregnancy, and this time allows for "flexibility in wiring." Therefore, Segalowitz concluded, "each individual's brain is unique" — although identical twins have "extremely similar" brain development.

Biology prof Robert Carlone explained some technical aspects of cloning, and pointed out, "The vast majority of cloning attempts fail at various stages. A litany of problems are seen" — such as birth defects in cloned animals.

Creating a perfect human

There was a lively discussion time following presentations by

the six speakers. One student asked, "Can we create a perfect human being?" Prof. Adonis Skandalis replied, "Our state of knowledge of the human genome is quite primitive." Besides, he added, "Are blue eyes better than green? There's no such thing as a perfect human."

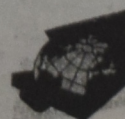
"Theologically, I followed that," added Schuurman, smiling.

The panelists also debated whether or not a six-cell human embryo is a thing or a person. Nathan argued an embryo "will turn into a person," and needs to be respected. But Richards observed, "It's pretty clear embryos don't have the status of older men and women." She argued that "babies are being bought" from surrogate mothers and by adoptive parents.

Richards also pointed out that cloning technology is being developed in the West "for rich people among us, at the cost of hospital beds. I'm an ecologist. I don't think that can go on much longer." But she also stated that if her son could be helped through such technology, she'd pay for an expensive cure.

Later on, Schuurman explained that he and John Black, a retired Brock physics professor, had planned the event. Schuurman was "very pleased" with the high turnout. "I got good feedback from people," he observed. Some appreciated the progression from scientific to religious and moral viewpoints.

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Insight/News

Be generous to those who matter in your life

Lisa M. Petsche

Apart from the events of September 11, the most influential occurrence of 2001 for me was the death of a long-time friend. It was completely unexpected, which intensified the shock.

Ever since, I've been contemplating questions such as: What is the meaning of life? What's my own, unique purpose? How do I want people to remember me?

What's really important

Popular culture would have us believe we are valued primarily for external characteristics — how we look, what we accomplish and what we possess — rather than for who we are as spiritual beings. The eulogies of Cameron were a powerful reminder of what's really important when all is said and done. While objectively his life was not extraordinary, his impact was — and continues to be — reassuringly significant.

Cameron was a guitar player,

singer and songwriter who dreamed of making a living with his music. For many years he tried to do this, traveling extensively and living on a shoestring. Eventually, though, he tired of the nomadic life and the continual stress of trying to make ends meet. So he enrolled in college, with a goal of working in the computer industry by day and performing at night. Although he turned to programming for practical reasons, he liked the challenge it provided and was respected for his integrity. He quickly became accomplished to the point where he was earning more money than he'd ever imagined.

You'd never have guessed Cameron's income from his lifestyle, though, for he remained true to his philosophy of simple living. All he wanted was enough money to be able to meet his basic needs — food, clothing and rented shelter — and afford guitars, sound equipment and rehearsal hall time.

Increased compassion

Cameron had a lot of wisdom, much of it hard-earned. While he probably had more than his share of difficulties during his abbreviated life, rather than turn bitter he let painful experiences lead him to increased compassion for others and, as a musician, to new depths of self-expression.

Over the years he shared some insights that I've never forgotten. For example, when I was tiring of university life, anxious to get out into "the real world," when I finally graduated only to find myself unemployed, then underemployed, and when I put my career aspirations on hold to have a family, Cameron offered encouraging words like this: "Don't ever measure your success by other people's success. Success is a total picture, not just position or money. What kind of person are you? How many friends have you got? Do you help others? How is your self-discipline? Especially ask

yourself this: am I growing and learning, becoming a well-rounded person? Your success is measured by the energy you put into every day."

He helped me on my own journey

Even as he was struggling to find his place in the world, he helped me on my own journey. He especially understood my quest to discover where my passion for writing fit into my life.

Cameron had many special qualities that drew people to him. He was a sensitive listener, generous with compliments that were always sincere, and unfailingly modest. He also had a love for learning and philosophical conversation. As time goes by, my sorrow about his passing is gradually evolving into gratitude for having had him in my life for 20 years.

Cameron died exactly one week before my birthday. Tearfully I recalled a card he once sent me,

when he was on the road, in which he wrote: "My birthday wish for you is this: all the happiness and joy that a good family and close friends can bring, and the inner peace that comes from living a deeply thought-out life." It's one of the most heartfelt gifts I have ever received.

I hope to never forget the advice of one of Cameron's colleagues, who concluded his eloquent eulogy this way: "Perhaps the saddest aspect of Cameron's death, for me, is that I didn't say any of these things to him. I suggest to anyone listening — and plan to make it true for myself — that you be generous now with the people who matter to you."

I made several resolutions for this new year, and that one's at the top of my list.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and freelance writer living in Stoney Creek, Ont.

Cell discovery could transform cloning, embryo research

Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)—The discovery of a stem cell in adults that reportedly has remarkable powers could prove a watershed in the contentious debates over cloning and human embryo research.

A researcher at the University of Minnesota has found a stem cell that "can turn into every single tissue in the body," according to a report in the latest issue of *New Scientist*. The cell might be the "most important" ever discovered, according to the report.

A confirmation of the discovery would mean cells from a person's body "could one day be turned into all sorts of perfectly matched replacement tissues and even organs," *New Scientist* reported.

Revolutionary news

A validation of the finding also would seriously undercut the campaign by some researchers, patients rights groups and politicians for human embryonic stem cell experimentation as well as human cloning for research purposes. Both procedures result in the destruction of the embryos.

"If this discovery proves to be



MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

The inside of a human heart. The newly-discovered stem cell "could one day be turned into all sorts of perfectly matched replacement tissues and even organs," New Scientist reports.

true, this will be genuinely splendid and revolutionary news," said Ben Mitchell, a biomedical consultant for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "This announcement is a palpable reminder that stem cell research is still in its infancy. We should only pursue research that is scrupulously ethical."

With this discovery, "there will be no possible justification for destroying human embryos for their cells," said Mitchell, an associate

professor of bioethics and contemporary culture at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Fully informed moral conscience

Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., the lead sponsor of a Senate attempt to ban both research and reproductive cloning, said in a written release, "As this debate continues, we need to constantly examine and re-examine the scientific facts with a fully informed moral conscience. I am heartened to know that scientific research has proven, once again, that destructive human embryo research and human cloning are unnecessary."

Christian Medical Association Executive Director David Stevens said in a written statement, "If the remarkable results of this study prove consistent with early published reports, then no reasonable person could justify violating ethical barriers to clone and harvest human embryos for their cells."

University of Minnesota researcher Catherine Verfaillie discovered the cell in adult bone marrow, and extensive research has been conducted, according to

the Jan. 23 *New Scientist*.

The experiments indicate the cells, called multipotent adult progenitor cells, have the same versatility as embryonic stem cells without at least one drawback. The adult cells can develop into numerous types of tissues — muscle, cartilage, bone and liver — and different types of neurons and brain cells, according to *New Scientist*. Unlike embryonic cells, they do not appear to form cancerous masses when injected into adults, according to the report.

The report of the discovery came less than a week after the National Academy of Sciences affirmed its earlier recommendation that the cloning of embryos be permitted in order to procure stem cells for research.

The Senate is expected to take up the legislation requiring a comprehensive ban on cloning in February or March. Sen. Arlen Specter, R.-Pa., also has signaled he will seek to liberalize the federal government's policy concerning funding embryonic stem cell research. Specter's bill would fund research in which embryos are destroyed. It already appeared unlikely to pass the House of Representatives, and the discovery of an adult cell that has the same properties may harm its chances in the Senate.

Last August, President Bush announced after months of deliberation he would permit funding for

research on the more than 60 lines, or colonies, of existing stem cells "where the life-and-death decision has already been made." He said the policy would allow research "without crossing a fundamental moral line" of funding the destruction of human embryos.

The Bush administration has reversed National Institutes of Health guidelines implemented under President Clinton that allowed federal funding of research on stem cells after their procurement, which destroys the embryo. Under the Clinton administration's ruling, such research was legal if the act of deriving the cells were privately funded.

Though the ERLC and other pro-life groups oppose embryonic stem cell research, they support the use of stem cells from such sources as placentas, umbilical cord blood and adult bone marrow. The procurement of cells from such sources does not harm a human being. Even before the University of Minnesota discovery, studies had demonstrated stem cells from these sources could be effective, although supposedly less versatile than embryonic cells.

The isolation of stem cells for the first time in 1998 provided hope for producing cells and tissues to use as replacements in treating a variety of conditions, including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, heart disease and diabetes.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

WHEN YOU READ THIS, the information is often outdated, because foreseeing events three weeks in advance, doesn't always work. After all, predicting, especially about the future, is no easy thing. So forgive me when I occasionally come up with old news.

Old news, for instance, is that President Bush was watching television and presented the world press with an opportunity to prattle about pretzels. Overnight this Air Canada favorite snack became the talk of the world.

Here is what I learned: Did you know that a pretzel is a Christian symbol? No, not because Bush ate it and choked on it while watching football, but as the *Daily Mail* in Britain told me, the word comes from 'pretiola', Latin for 'little reward.' The dough is folded to resemble a child's arms in prayer, and the three holes represent the Holy Trinity of the Christian Church. So next time you are nibbling a pretzel, remember this.

However, the irreverent people of the foreign press have gone beyond the symbolism and been wondering whether Bush can watch television and chew pretzels at the same time. Said the Greek daily *To Vima*, "George Bush attempted to taste the biscuit with the attention focused on a football game — a combination of actions that, it appears, proved difficult."

The (London based) *Independent* found the story 'hard to swallow', and continued, "Was he poisoned perhaps? Has the stress of fighting the war on terrorism while fending off inquiries about the collapse of his friend Ken Lay's Enron overwhelmed him? Was there maybe some family tiff?" The German tabloid *Das Bild* wondered whether the president has an alcohol problem again, falling not only off the couch, but off the wagon too?

ENOUGH PRETZEL caprola. But not enough press talk. The reporters see the Afghanistan war as different. Where, in earlier conflicts — Vietnam especially — the press was critical about military strategy while the brass

always was upbeat and confident, this time the news hawks on both sides of the border look at the Afghan war as a *fait accompli*, while the Pentagon says that nothing could be farther from the truth.

We know that the Taliban regime has been toppled, and two cities, Kabul and Kandahar, are relatively safe. The strange part the world's papers are playing is that where Rumsfeld keeps on saying that this war is far from over, our dailies report victory. Period. True, the goal to stop Al Qaeda from using Afghanistan as a base of operations has been achieved. But it is far from sure whether the Taliban as a fighting force has been destroyed. The vast majority have not been killed or captured and have escaped with their weapons. Who knows, the Taliban might regroup over the winter, forge alliances with various warlords as they have in the past and re-emerge as a force.

THE U.S. AND Canadians are capable fighters, no doubt. But they sorely lack reliable intelligence. CIA agents are trying to redeem themselves after the September 11 fiasco. But they don't know the language and are being duped by smart tribal chiefs who can recognize a dollar anywhere. These battle-scarred soldiers are seduced by the wads of \$100 bills bulging out of the secret agents' pockets, and so they feed them phoney tips for precious greenbacks.

There are a lot of uncertainties in Afghanistan. I believe that the Canadian government was far too rash to commit its troops to Afghanistan, which can hardly be called a country. It's more like a prehistoric mound of ruins. The people live in medieval conditions while having late 20th century weapons. Nobody knows whether the interim government hastily formed in a pressure cooker atmosphere in Germany can create a unity out of umpteen fiefdoms. Nobody knows whether the Taliban will play a role in the future. Nobody knows what is

happening in Pakistan, sharing a wild-west 2,000 km border with Afghanistan.

So the Canadian command — read Chretien — eager to prove to a paternalistic Pentagon that it can run an army on a shoestring, are at great risk to suffer casualties. Who knows, they may be used as cannon fodder to save American body bags, as Britain did to the Canadians in Dieppe in WWII and to the Australians at Gallipoli in WWI — a modern version of colonialism.

THIS WAR IS NO ordinary war. The media, pushed by pretzel-prone Bush, confused demons with morons and demonized bin Laden, al-Qaeda and the Taliban. That they are seen as devils, is evident from the way they have been brought to Guantanamo Bay and housed there as wild animals in cages. The notion that the Taliban had a war plan and that they were executing it when they withdrew from the cities was simply beyond most of the media, who are celebrating victories where the military is portraying ongoing campaigns.

All this can greatly affect the popular mood. On the one hand, the strategists are working to prepare the public for an extended conflict, also probably having an excursion to Iraq in mind. On the other hand, the media are presenting the war as a set of dramatic victories. The great danger is that when soldiers do become engaged in some real fighting and prolonged overseas duties, the public will become restive, especially when the news from the economic front at home turns for the worse as well.

This war ain't over for a long time. Perhaps the airforce should drop down loads of pretzels. That might choke the enemy especially if they know that it is a Christian symbol.

THIS BRINGS ME TO THE state of the Canadian army.

These poor soldiers in Edmonton. The uncertainty. Way back in November we heard: yes, 1,000 of our Canadian soldiers will go to Afghanistan. No, they won't go there. Yes, possibly perhaps, maybe, if General Franks, in charge of the U.S. forces there, will ask for them. If they go, he has to guarantee that no stray bullets come their way, because, says Chretien, our soldiers are not bullet proof and may get hurt.

If they go, the brass in Ottawa has to call either the Kremlin or the Pentagon to provide air transport, because Canada lacks the

necessary planes. We have macho Fighters planes and the DND — Department of National Defense — has allotted \$1.6 billions to upgrade these — but the real need is to replace our unglamorous, antique, lumbering Hercules slowpokes. We simply can't afford those Porsche-like F-18s when our troops must beg other countries to ferry them. With lots of bargains out there, now is the time to get some Airbuses or Boeings: airlines everywhere are mothballing their planes by the scores due to disappearing passengers. So because we have no planes, and because the Americans really don't want the Canucks there, as they might object to the American interpretation of the treatment of the Taliban prisoners, there still is grave doubt whether they ever will see the rubble in that ruined stretch of countryside going by the name of Afghanistan.

If they do go, they better bring no helicopters. Thanks to Chretien we, Canadian taxpayers, were forced to waste half a billion dollars on hot air, when our 'popular' Prime Minister, in a fit of irrational election heat, cancelled the deal for these versatile flying machines the previous government had ordered eight years ago. Now the military wants the same type again. In the meantime, the 40 year old Sea-Kings are stitched together every day — older than the pilots who fly them — making them the laughingstock of the entire world in their patched up equipment.

AMONG THE NATO countries, tiny Luxemburg is at the bottom of defense spending. Next is G8 member Canada. The army is now advertising for high-tech people and will give them signing bonuses, but what they gain at the start, they will lose in poor pay later. Frankly, what our army needs even more is an educated soldiery and officer corps. In the U.S., recruits need at least Grade 12. The same standards should be here. Almost all officers there have undergraduate degrees, and the U.S. air force requires a graduate degree for promotion to major. In Canada only half of them have this qualification and only six per cent have gone beyond that. Professor Granatstein has noted that there is a distinct culture of "anti-intellectualism of the brass" in the Canadian Forces.

We do have an abundance of officers: 20 per cent of the Canadian Forces consist of lieutenants and higher. Most other armies function quite well with 10 per cent or even five, and that without a huge

bureaucracy. If headquarter size were the determinant, we would win hands down: 5,600 uniformed personnel daily commute to National Defense Head Quarters in Ottawa at a cost of \$350 million per year, representing almost 10 per cent of the entire regular Canadian Army.

Needed in the Canadian Forces is a larger base and a much smaller top, which has become a self-perpetuating, politicized, anti-intellectual apparatus, with a public service mentality, that fosters a frozen demeanor, stifles innovation and is unable to reform itself. The once proud Canadian military arm needs a wholesale housecleaning. One of the largest technical companies in the world, ABB Ltd, with more than 150,000 employees world-wide, has a head office staff of less than 300 in Switzerland. Our tiny army of 75,000 can finance better pay and conditions just by trimming the fat.

SO, WHAT CAN BE DONE? Now, with a new fervor for the armed forces, and with unemployment increasing and a lot of young people at loose ends, this is the time for our volunteer army to set higher standards: at least Grade 12 for soldiers and a BA degree for those being admitted to military colleges.

What sort of army? We can't, nor should we, compete with the U.S.A. What we can do well — and what Uncle Sam hates doing — is peacekeeping and protecting civilians. Let's exploit that strength and also not shy away from conflict. Chretien's remarks were degrading for the armed forces: they are, after all, an armed force with lethal weapons and great skills and perfectly capable of defending themselves.

As Afghanistan has demonstrated, there is a need for special forces, for highly trained small units, which can ferret out dangerous elements. But our real requirement is for a Rapid Response Regiment (Trenton-based), able to go in our own modern transport planes anywhere in the world, to move combat-capable ground forces quickly to respond to humanitarian emergencies wherever in the world they appear.

Believe me: these situations will multiply in an increasingly unstable world.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. His web site has been updated. His book: The Eighth Day, Life and Love in the Hereafter, has also been revised and is available on: www.geocities.com/hielema

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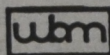
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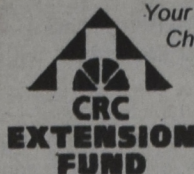


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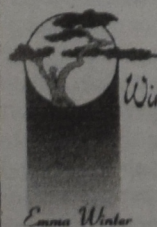
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And editing style. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	 <p><i>Congratulations to Johanna Vanden Akker (Jo) on her 90th birthday.</i></p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to God we wish to announce the 90th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother Johanna Vanden Akker (Jo) (nee Marcus) Rita & Tom Valstar Henny & John Broekema Bert & Mieke Vanden Akker Joanna & George Langbroek Gertruida & Herman Graves Leo Vanden Akker grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Open House on February 16, 2002, at Covenant Christian Reformed Church, St. Catharines, from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Home address: c/o Tom & Rita Valstar, 1 Johanna Dr., Box 273, St. Davids, ON L0S 1P0 Phone 905-262-4866</p> <p>Garijp, the Neth. St. Thomas, Ont. 1912 February 22 2002 With gratitude to God for His faithfulness we hope, the Lord willing, to celebrate with our father, grandfather and great-grandfather Ray Wymenga his 90th birthday. An open house will be held on February 22, 2002 from 2 to 4 p.m. at First Christian Reformed Church, Elm St. St. Thomas. Home Address: 15 Bonnie Place, St. Thomas, ON N5R 5T8</p> <p>Anniversary 1977 February 25 2002 With thanksgiving to God for his faithfulness, we wish to announce the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents THEO and JULIA de VRIES (nee Viersen) We thank God for the love you have shown to us and especially towards each other. May you have many more years together! Love Always. Amanda, Jacob, Luke, Meaghan and Katelyn de Vries</p>	<p>With thanks to the Lord, we celebrated the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents WILLIAM VAN ARRAGON and HARMINA LINDE on January 23, 2002. Psalm 119:165 was their wedding text, and that has been a guide to them all of their married life. Jenny & Martin Oldengarm Geertje & Charles Bamford Mary Ann & Jerry Kingma Gary & Gretchen van Arragon Leo & Cathy van Arragon Harma & Raymond Badgley Wilma van Arragon, Ralph Linder Wayne & Brenda Collinson Mike Parker, Eleanor Thompson Dan Fletcher Correspondence may be sent to them c/o Mary Ann & Jerry Kingma, RR 7, Strathroy, ON N7G 3H8</p> <p>1947 February 12 2002 It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we announce the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents ART and MARIA (RIET) VAN DYK We are ever grateful for your love and thoughtfulness. With love from your family: Bill Zylstra & Diana Wassink, Mike & Rachel, Trent, David & Trisha and Robyn Zylstra Jack, Wendy, Joshua, Justin, Jason and Leah Van Dyk Corinne, John, Erin, Crystal and Laura Bosch Jackie, Donald, Daniel, Jessica, Thomas and Benjamin Aasman and their loving daughter Anne (t) Home address: 240 Quigley Rd., Apt. 202, Hamilton, ON L8K 5M8</p> <p>1962 February 24 2002 With praise and thanks to God, we announce the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents HENK and INA TIMMERMAN (nee Schuringa) We love you, Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma! Dave & Marsha Timmerman - Cambridge, Ont. Bianca, Ian Pete & Catherine Timmerman - Uganda Nathan, Jessica, Maisha Sharon & Kevin Vander Meulen - Hamilton, Ont. Esther, Micah Rob & Bethany Timmerman - Burford, Ont. Amy, Mason, Brock Address: 61 Woodland Dr., Cambridge, ON N1R 2X7</p>	<p>1952 January 22 2002 "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." (Prov. 3:6) With thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness, we wish to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents WALTER and HENNIE HEUVING (nee Bouwman) May the Lord continue to bless you! With love from your family: Jane & Bob Andree Ann, Lynette, Julie, Chantale Rita & Paul Kloosterman Heather, Brian, Pam, Val, Kevin Ginus & Jean Heuving Bev, Steven, Sharon, Jennifer Linda & Lubbert Noort Justin, Eric Shirley & Hugh MacMillan Derek, Amanda Home address: PO BOX 484, Athens, ON K0E 1B0</p> <p>50th Wedding Anniversary 1952 February 12 2002 HANS and JOANNE SCHOOLS (nee Hoogendoorn) With thankfulness to God, the 5 children and 18 grandchildren wish to praise the Lord for His 50 years of faithfulness in the union of their parents/grandparents. The children are: John & Helen Schools - Hamilton, Ont. Fred & Diana Horst - Pierrefonds, Que. Jean-Guy & Barbara DeBlois - Montreal, Que. Harvey & Diana Schools - Hamilton, Ont. Mark & Lianne Schools - Caledonia, Ont. "I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly." Home address: 113-1415 Upper Wellington, Hamilton, ON L9A 5E8 Phone: 905-575-7746</p>
<p>Birthdays</p> <p>Nieuwveen Hagersville the Neth. Ont. 1917 February 15 2002 "Blessed are those whose strength is in You." (Psalm 84:5a) We praise and thank God for eighty-five years of faithfulness to Nel van Eyk (nee van Harten) Happy Birthday and may God continue to bless you with His goodness in the coming years. With love from your family: Gary & Anne - St. Catharines, Ont. Paul & Leah, Natasha & Ted Keith & Joanne - Chatham, Ont. Nicholas, Bethany, Benjamin Leo & Karen - Hagersville, Ont. Richard - Hagersville, Ont. Address: 107 King St. E, Hagersville, ON N0A 1H0</p> <p>To advertise in Christian Courier, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.</p>	<p>Wedding STADT DRAIJER: With thankfulness to God for their desire to establish a Christ-centred home, Paul and Linda Stadt of Chatham, Ont. and Louis and Willemien Draijer of Richmond, New Zealand, announce the wedding celebration of their children Andrea Pauline and Brian William The wedding will take place, the Lord willing, on March 2, 2002, at 4 p.m. in the First Christian Reformed Church, Chatham, Ontario. Future address: 91 Milford Ave, Unit 409, Waterloo, ON N2L 3Z5</p> <p>Anniversary "My eyes are ever on the Lord." (Ps. 25:15a) 1952 February 21 2002 With thanksgiving to our Lord for His faithfulness, we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents JAN WILLEM and ADRIANA PENNING (nee in't Hout) Bill & Nancy Pennings - Kitchener, Ont. Ina & Bernie Pennings - Iona Station, Ont. Eric & Carla Pennings - Strathroy, Ont. Linda & Ron McIntyre - Lawrencetown, N.S. Blessed with 20 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Open House at Cornerstone United Reformed Church of London, Ont., 180 Waterloo St. (corner of Waterloo & Grey) on Saturday, February 23, 2002, from 2 - 4 p.m. Best wishes only please. Home address: 1613 Scott Ave., London, ON N5W 2J4</p>	<p>Obituary On November 25, 2001, the Lord took our dear brother and uncle YSBRAND KUIKEN home. He will be sorely missed but never forgotten. Remembered with much love by: brother-in-law Jelke and nephew Dick Wierstra - the Netherlands Dirk & Marte Kuiken and their children - the Netherlands Jacob Kuiken and his children Ate & Anne Kuiken and their children. <i>Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast, There, by His Love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest.</i></p>	<p>Obituary 1949 2002 After a long struggle with several illnesses the Lord took home HIEKE BOSMA much loved mother of Robert Malcolm dear daughter of Tony & Shirley Bosma sister of: Ralph & Carol Bosma Ed Bosma Len & Rita Bosma Tony & Joyce Bosma David Bosma Sadly missed by 12 nieces and nephews. The funeral was held on January 8, 2002 in the Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, Brighton. Pastor Ron Fisher and hospital chaplain Nel de Boer officiated.</p> <p>Call Christian Courier today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.</p>

Classifieds

Obituaries

Avereest Brantford, Ont.
the Neth. Canada
February 2, 1914 - January 4, 2002
Psalm 42

Our dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather

WIERT HAZENBERG

went to be with his Lord and Savior, peacefully at home in his 88th year. Beloved husband of the late Jantje (Mol) Hazenberg (1995).

Loving father of:

Jane

John & Gerda

Jennie & Peter

Predeceased by his son Bill in 1996.

Loving Grandpa of 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; predeceased by grandchild Cindy in 1983.

Predeceased by his four brothers in the Netherlands.

A memorial service was held on January 6 at Hope Christian Reformed Church, Brantford, with Pastor Richard Grift officiating.

Interment was at Mt. Hamilton Municipal Cemetery.

October 3, 1907 - January 21, 2002
It is with deep sadness that the family of

JOHANNA WINTER

(nee Jager)

announces her passing from this life in her 95th year.

It is with great joy that we celebrate the gift of eternal life that God has now granted to her.

She was the dearly loved wife for 65 years of Henry Winter (†1999) and the cherished mother of:

Peter & Nell Winter

Bé Winter (with the Lord)

Jake & Alice Winter

Ann & John Knier

Bé Winter (with the Lord)

Ben & Julie Winter

Henry & Emma Winter

John & Jacomina Winter

Reynold & Cathy Winter

Gerda & Brian van Staaldin

Ellen & John Hunse

Joanne & Ted Parker

42 grandchildren and 59 great-grandchildren will fondly remember her.

4 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild also predeceased her.

Following interment, a memorial service was held on January 24, 2002, at the Hope Christian Reformed Church, Brantford, Ont. Grandson Harold Winter, Rev. Jeff Jansen and Rev. George VanArragon officiated.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Correspondence address:

Pete Winter, 336 Henry St., Brantford, ON N3S 7R5

Church News

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First CRC Calgary

will be celebrating their

50th anniversary April 19-21, 2002.

We invite all former members and friends to join us in this weekend celebration, beginning with a 50s social on Friday, a commemorative banquet Saturday, Open House/lunch at First CRC Sunday noon and a service of celebration on Sunday at 2 p.m. at Bethany Chapel. For more information/dinner tickets please contact Jim Braaksma 403-246-4183 or email celebr8fifty@aol.com.

Lord's Day 1: *I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.*

On Jan. 19, 2002 surrounded by a loving family, the Lord took home:

WINNIE STEENBERGEN

in her 66th year.

Beloved wife of John Steenbergen.

Daughter of Pearl Klooster and the late

Sietse Klooster

Mother of:

Don & Nancy Steenbergen

Diana & Bill Mulder

Ed Steenbergen

Nancy & Larry White

Brian & Christa Steenbergen

and many grandchildren who all live in Aylmer, Ont.

Sister of John & Corrie Klooster, Belmont, Ont.

Jack & Liz Klooster, Kitchener, Ont.

Predeceased by sister Margaret Posthumus and her husband John.

Funeral services were held at the Aylmer Christian Reformed Church on Monday January 22, 2002.

May 29, 1932 - January 18, 2002

"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:8)

On the morning of Friday, January 18, 2002, peacefully, surrounded by his family, the Lord received into His glory, His child

CLARENCE HEIDA

much loved husband, father and grandfather.

Sadly missed by his wife of 40 years, Trix Heida, of Mitchell, Ont. and their children:

Terry & Marlene Heida - Mitchell, Ont.

Peter & Michelle Heida - Stratford, Ont.

Jessica, Devon

Anthony & Theresa Heida - Hamilton, Ont.

Adam

Edward Heida and Rose Bouwers

(friend) - Guelph, Ont.

Sonya Heida and Paul MacDonald

(friend) - Hamilton, Ont.

Funeral took place on January 21, 2002, at the Christian Reformed Church of Stratford, Ont., Rev. Bill Hoogland officiating.

Correspondence address: Box 1221, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0

Church News

Classis Niagara plans to meet Wednesday, May 15, 2002, at 4:00 p.m. at the **Grace Christian Reformed Church of Welland**. Items for the agenda should be received by me by April 1, 2002.

John TeBrake, Stated Clerk.

Miscellaneous

Freelance concert organist, using traditional and contemporary music, available for church anniversaries, inaugural recitals, church organ fundraising recitals, weddings, etc. Please contact Dr. John Vandertuin, A.R.C.T., A.Mus., B.Mus.(Hons.), M.Mus., D.M.A., 8 Olive Tree Rd., Apt. 503, Brantford, ON N3R 5Z2 519-752-5498

Miscellaneous

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The millionaire woman of Xinjiang

(NC)—Four years ago, Rebiya Kadeer was a successful businesswoman in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in north west China. She was well-known in the country, and the media referred to her as the "millionaire woman of Xinjiang". In 1995, she was an official Chinese delegate to the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women.

Not satisfied with achieving personal success, the mother of ten children launched the "Thousand Mothers Movement" in November 1997. The movement's aim was to promote the advancement of women by building Uighur businesses run by women.

For her efforts to empower women, and the political activism of her husband who lives in the United States, Rebiya Kadeer attracted the attention of the Chinese authorities. In December 1997, Kadeer was reportedly taken to a police station where she was held for a few days before being brought before a judge. She was ordered to report to the authorities on a weekly basis. The

assets of the "Thousand Mothers Movement" were also frozen.

On August 11, 1999, Rebiya Kadeer was detained by police as she was making her way to a meeting with a visiting delegation from the US Congressional Research Service. In a secret trial, on March 9, 2000 she was sentenced to eight years in prison for "providing secret information to foreigners." The verdict describes the "secret information" as copies of four publicly available newspapers.

Although Kadeer's health has seriously deteriorated, partly due to the punishments she had received in prison, requests that she be taken to a hospital have been denied. Concern for Kadeer and other detained Uighurs has increased following the events of September 11, 2001.

Shortly after the World Trade Centre attacks, a government spokesperson in Beijing called for international support for its crackdown on domestic "terrorism." The call followed reports that the Chinese authorities had

launched a new campaign to suppress "terrorist and separatist" activity in the XUAR, and local officials made it clear that "ethnic separatists" were a major target of the campaign.

Several hundred Uighurs accused of involvement in independence struggles have been executed since the mid-1990s, thousands of others have been detained, imprisoned and tortured, and growing restrictions have been placed on the Islamic clergy and the practice of Islam in the region.

Amnesty International considers Rebiya Kadeer a prisoner of conscience. The organization is concerned not just for her personal health and freedom, but also for the free expression of political dissent, and religious freedom, in the XUAR and other parts of China.

For a free information package on how you can join the calls for Rebiya Kadeer's release, please write to Amnesty International, 56 Temperance Street, Suite 800, Toronto, Ontario. M5H 3V5.

- News Canada

One step closer to a ban on the use of Child Soldiers

(NC)—On February 12, 2002 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibiting the use of children in armed conflicts takes effect.

More than half a million children under 18 are believed to be in service with armed forces, paramilitaries and armed groups in 85 countries worldwide.

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers has been campaigning since 1998 against all forms of military recruitment and use of children under 18. The Coalition includes Amnesty International, Defence for Children International, Human Rights Watch, and several other non-governmental organizations from around the world.

The Optional Protocol prohibits the direct participation of children under 18 in hostilities, all compulsory recruitment

of children under 18 by governments, and any recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups. It also requires states to raise the minimum age of voluntary recruitment and implement strict safeguards.

"The tide is finally turning against the exploitation of children as soldiers," the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers said. "The Optional Protocol reflects the strong international consensus against this abuse and lays the foundation for a global ban on child soldiers."

For a free package of information on how you can support the ban on the use of children in armed conflicts, write to Amnesty International, 56 Temperance Street, Suite 800, Toronto, Ontario. M5H 3V5.

- News Canada

Food..? For Thought..??

Prayer is like a bolt without a nut; if we do not do all we can to help bring about that which we pray for.

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How do Canadian entrepreneurs spend their time?

(NC)—In terms of issues Canadian entrepreneurs say they should be spending time on, but don't, the most frequently mentioned areas are business growth, customer service and planning, finds a recent survey for Grant Thornton LLP. (More survey results at www.GrantThornton.ca/owner-managers).

- News Canada

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Miscellaneous

DORDT COLLEGE

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Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2002-2003 in the following areas:

Communication**Computer Science**

Generalist; computer networking background

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Foreign Language

Spanish

History (Full-time sabbatical replacement for spring or fall semester 2002-03)

European/American

Physical Science/Astronomy/Earth Science**Physics** (One to two year sabbatical replacement)

Undergraduate Physics/Physical science courses

Social Work

Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses & field practice

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dordt College

498 4th Avenue NE

Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

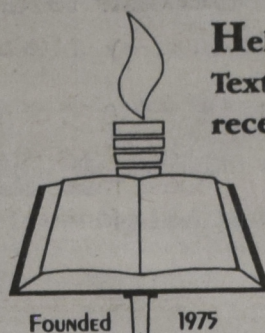
Facsimile: 712 722-4496

E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu

Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

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Job Opportunity

London District Christian Secondary School (LDCSS) invites applications for a full-time

Development/Promotion Director

to begin August, 2002. Applications from qualified people interested in a part-time position will also be considered.

LDCSS has been providing a Christ-centred high school education in the greater London area since 1965. We serve 340 students with 30 full and part-time staff. Our mission is to provide students with a secondary education that integrates Christian faith, learning, and living, for a life of Christian service.

Responsibilities include:

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- community development

Qualified applicants will possess:

- a living relationship with Jesus Christ
- love for, knowledge of, and experience with Christian education
- excellent oral and written communication skills
- ability to work in a team
- organizational and leadership abilities
- financial and budgeting skills
- working knowledge of Spread Sheet, Word Processor, and Presentation software packages
- fundraising experience
- knowledge of planned giving programs

Applications will be received in full confidence. Closing date is Monday, February 11, 2002.

A detailed job description is available from the board secretary. Please send a resume and three references to:

Maria Oegema, Board Secretary
10882 Sunset Road, Box 111
Talbotville, ON N0L 2K0
(519) 633-9722
e-mail: oegema@on.aibn.com

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Miscellaneous

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books@interpc.ca

Personal

I'm a Christian single man, 37 years old, attending the Christian Reformed Church, looking for a female in her 30s. Doesn't have to be good looking, but I'm looking for somebody with a nice personality. I've never been married and would like to meet somebody for that reason. Please send letters to File #2726, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

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Applicants must be committed Christians and certifiable by the BC College of Teachers. Please forward letter of application, resume, pastor's reference and statement of faith to:

Bill Helmus, Elementary Principal

Pacific Christian School

671 Agnes Street

Victoria, BC V8Z 2E7

Phone: 250-479-9365

Fax: 250-479-3685

E-mail: bhelmus@pacificchristian.ca

Website: www.pacificchristian.ca

John Knox Christian School in Oakville

is accepting applications for the following positions:

- Maternity leave for Grade 3.** Position begins April 15, 2002, and could be extended to include the following school year.
- Possible full-time junior position** for the 2002-2003 school year.

Ability to teach music would be an asset.

Applicants for both positions must hold a valid teaching certificate and be able to integrate computer technology into the curriculum.

Please send resume including philosophy of Christian education to:

Mrs. L. Keith, Principal

John Knox Christian School

2232 Sheridan Garden Drive,

Oakville, ON L6J 7T1

Fax: 905-829-8056

E-mail: office@jkcs-oakville.org

Classifieds

Teachers

CHATHAM, ONT.:
Chatham Christian High School invites teachers, who demonstrate a passionate love for God and young people, to join our team. We are a growing school in a brand new facility, supported by a strong Christian community. We seek applications for Vice-Principal as well as teachers with strengths in the following areas: Physical Education, Math, Science, Business, and Special Education. Please address your letter of application and resume to:

John Van Pelt, 475 Keil Dr. S,
Chatham, ON N7M 6L8
Phone 519-352-4980,
fax 519-352-4041;

e-mail:
johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

TORONTO, ONT.:
Toronto District Christian High School invites applications from qualified Christian teachers for the following five full-time positions beginning August 1, 2002: **Computer Science, Mathematics, Industrial Arts, Biology, and Science.** For more information check our website: tdchristian.on.ca Send resumes to: siebenga@tdchristian.on.ca or Ren Siebenga, Toronto District Christian High School, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2V7

JARVIS:

Jarvis District Christian School has a maternity leave opening available at the Intermediate level. JDCS is looking for a **Grade 6 homeroom teacher** with the ability to teach science, math and art in Grades 7 and 8. This position starts the beginning of April 2002, and continues for the 2002-2003 school year.

Please send your inquiries, letters of application, resume, a brief statement of your philosophy of Christian education and other related information to:

Garry Glasbergen, Principal
Jarvis District Christian School
PO Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0
school phone: 519-587-4444
school fax: 519-587-2985
e-mail: jdcsc@kwic.com
home: 905-765-7919

OWEN SOUND, ONT.:

Timothy Christian School
Effective Date of Vacancy:
September 2002
Application Deadline: March 6, 2002
Timothy Christian School, Owen Sound, has a possible opening in the **upper elementary level**. This opening is due to the large growth of this non-denominational Christian School. Applicants with physical education/science majors will be given priority. Interested candidates should send their resume, cover letter and letters of reference to:

Greg Ayrheart, Principal
Timothy Christian School
199 4th Avenue West,
Owen Sound, ON N4K 4V1
Phone: 519-371-9151;
Fax: 519-371-8607;
e-mail: greg@timothyys.org

Job Opportunities

OPENINGS AT ABBOTSFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

for the

2002/03 SCHOOL YEAR

Abbotsford Christian School, a multi-denominational school system serving over 1000 students at 3 campuses, is inviting applications for a number of openings:

Elementary (K-7)

- Music teacher
- Classroom teacher

Secondary (grades 8 - 12)

- Vice Principal, Student Services (student life and student discipline)
- Special Education/Learning Assistance Coordinator
- Art
- English
- French
- Home Economics (textiles)
- Math
- Technical Education (woodworking/construction)

For more information contact one of the principals:

Berta den Haan, Principal
Heritage Campus (K-7)
2884 Mission Hwy.
Abbotsford, BC V2S 3Y2
Phone: 604-850-5342
Fax: 604-859-9995
bdenhaan@uniserve.com

Dave Loewen, Principal
Clayburn Hills Campus (K-7)
3939 Old Clayburn Rd.
Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9
Phone: 604-850-2694
Fax: 604-850-7075
dloewen@uniserve.com

Ed Noot, Principal
Secondary Campus
35011 Old Clayburn Rd.
Abbotsford, BC V2S 7L7
Phone: 604-850-5342
Fax: 604-859-2240
enoot@uniserve.com

Langley Christian School

Invites applications for the following:

Elementary School: K-6

21789 - 50th Ave., Langley BC V3A 3T2

604-533-2222; Fax 604-533-7276

Henry Vanderveen, Principal

Possible openings in: **Grades 1-6**

E-mail: henryvanderveen@telus.net

Middle School and High School: 7-8, 9-12

22702 - 48 Ave., Langley BC V2Z 2T6

604-533-0839; Fax: 604-533-0842

Peter Van Huizen, Principal

Possible Openings in:

Grade 7 and 8 Humanities

Computer 7-12

Definite Openings in:

French 9-12

Learning Assistance-Special Education 7-12

Physics-Math 10-12

Biology-Earth Science 10-12

E-mail: pvanhuizen@lcmhs.ca

All applications must include a resume, statement of faith and educational philosophy, university transcripts, and references.

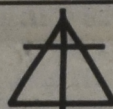
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The Bible League PO Box 5037 Burlington ON L7R 3Y8
1-800-363-9673 ministry@thebibleleague.ca

or

Langbroek, Louwerse & Thiessen 200-45668 Storey Avenue
Chilliwack BC V2R 3E4 clcga@uniserve.com

**RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR**

The Burlington office of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has a full-time opening for a **Research and Communications Coordinator**. This position is responsible for providing logistical, research and staff support to the Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG).

Bachelor's degree in the area of public policy and history and minimum of three to five years experience in a related field is required. Demonstrated experience in researching, analyzing, and report writing is required. Strong organizational, interpersonal and oral communication skills are essential. Knowledge of and membership in the Christian Reformed Church is required.

A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest, by **March 8, 2002**, to:

Director of Personnel

Christian Reformed Church in North America
3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8 Canada
616-224-5881/Fax 616-224-5896
E-mail: colemann@crcna.org

Miscellaneous

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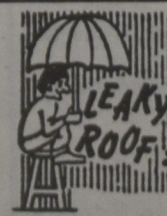
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Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- Feb. 15 Chr. Credit Union, Edmonton, Alta. 50th Anniversary, Francis Winspear Centre, 780-426-7165
- Feb. 22-24 50th Anniversary Inglewood CRC, Edmonton, Alta. Friday Family Night, Saturday evening Banquet, Sunday 10 a.m. Celebration Worship Service, 4 p.m. Organ concert/Hymn Sing.
- March 2 John Vandertuin Organ & Piano concert, Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont. See ad in this issue.
- March 12 Ministers' Conference, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont. with Dr. Marva Dawn, author and lecturer. For info. call 1-877-779-0913 ext. 4208 or locally 905-648-2131. See ad in next issue.
- March 30 Annual Easter Concert, Pro Musica Choir, Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.
- April 20 Festival of Praise concert, Centennial Hall, 550 Wellington St., London, Ont. \$13. 519-637-4357
- April 21 Calgary 1st CRC 50th Anniv. Former members welcome. For info. 403-243-2244 See ad in this issue.
- May 4 Chapel Singers, West Lincoln Hospital Benefit Concert, Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.

ORGAN & PIANO CONCERT

Virtuoso organist
John Vandertuin

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2002, AT 8:00 P.M.



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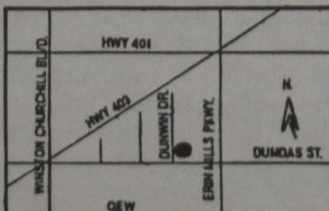
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News

Congolese volcano sparks CRWRC response



Janet Janz, CRWRC Relief Co-ordinator for East/South Africa, stands on dried lava, surveying the damage left by the volcanic eruption.

BURLINGTON, Ont. — In the midst of death and destruction following January's volcano eruption in Central Africa, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee is offering hope to thousands.

CRWRC-Rwanda staff spent the weekend in Gisenyi, Rwanda, helping to provide emergency assistance to Congolese refugees. These people had fled their homes in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, after the eruption of Mount Nyirangongo. The statistics are not yet firm, but it appears that close to 400,000 people fled the city, with 300,000 of them ending up

in Gisenyi.

Refugees are living in makeshift camps without food, water, or appropriate shelter. Janet Janz, CRWRC Relief Co-ordinator for East/South Africa, reports, "NGOs are scrambling to assess the situation and provide services."

While CRWRC is not currently active in the Congo, it has a long history of working in Rwanda, helping people to find long-term solutions to war and poverty.

"CRWRC is involved with its local partner, the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, to not only think about what is needed now but



Survivors of the volcano gathered in a Baptist Church in Goma.

what will be needed in the long run to rebuild homes and livelihoods once people can safely return," Janz said. "Our program partnerships in Rwanda have the capacity and the historical network to reach out to churches across the border in the Congo to collaborate in providing assistance."

Emergency help for refugees

Currently, CRWRC staff are providing emergency assistance to refugees in Rwanda through the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda. They are also in discussion with

other international relief organizations to co-ordinate a long-term recovery program for the people of Goma.

CRWRC provides a ministry, of development, relief, and justice education to people in need in 30 countries around the world, and has an international reputation for "helping people help themselves."

Financial donations towards CRWRC's response in the Congo can be given Online at www.crwrc.org or by calling 1-800-730-3490. Cheques can be written to CRWRC and earmarked "Volcano Response."

Witnessing her first volcano

Janet Janz and Liz Barker

CONGO — This is my first volcano. As Regional Disaster Response Co-ordinator, I have seen droughts which send people far away from their homes in search of food or a job so they can buy food.

I have seen floods which send people into treetops and rooftops while they watch their lives and livelihoods float away. I have seen conflicts which cause people to flee their communities and their countries, no longer able to live there safely.

A path of destruction

But when I arrived in Goma, Congo on Tuesday January 22, I saw something beyond my imagining. The lava was over two metres deep. It was hard and black and still warm under my feet — even though it had stopped flowing four days earlier. As far as my eye could see it had carved a path of destruction taking in houses, businesses, a cathedral, schools, and street lights. I could see some remnants of roof tiles and electricity poles in the smoking ruins. I was simultaneously impressed by and really scared of "Mother Nature."

At the Baptist Mission where we visited, we found the church sanctuary now a refuge for displaced families. Outside women were cooking rice and beans. Inside children played and women talked in small groups. Some slept. Others just stared off into space. One woman we spoke to, Germaine Kavira, told me she fled her house late at night with her children and a few neighbors. She had no time to grab her belongings except her cell phone. At first she had thought her house would be safe since the radio announcements did not include her neighborhood as an endangered one. But it soon became apparent that perhaps no one would be spared.

Refugees help each other

She headed for the Rwanda border but the border was closed and she spent the first night outside. Finally the border was opened and thousands crossed over looking for safety. She sought out a family she had helped in 1995, when Rwandans faced their own disaster and fled into Goma — a sort of refugee exchange program! Now Germaine is back in Goma. She

has been to her neighborhood and has seen that her house and all her things are completely burned. She is now at the Baptist church where she is a member. They have provided her with some food and a roof over her head.

What now for Germaine? Germaine and her family need immediate assistance with food and with non-food items like blankets, mattresses and clothes. They have already received plastic mugs, jerry cans (for water) and cooking pots. CRWRC is in the process of providing support to the Baptist Mission so they can hand out mattresses, plastic sheeting (for those sleeping outside), and cooking oil.

The Presbyterian Church of Rwanda is helping to co-ordinate these activities on the Rwandan side of the border. In the longterm houses will need to be rebuilt and small businesses supported to get going again. We are working with these two churches on a plan to get these communities working again.

In the Congolese town of Bukavu, 150 km away, thousands of people are arriving from Goma: weary, hungry, ill. Some came by boat, others by foot. They don't

know how long they will stay or what they will find when they go home. Again the churches respond to this disaster of their fellow countrymen by sending boats to collect those on the shores of Gisenyi Rwanda, and to open up their homes, church halls and guest houses. Organization and enthusiasm are not in short supply. There are many willing hands reaching out from the body of Christ but with limited resources.

In these initial days, this is how CRWRC's partners are actively assisting the survivors. Food for the Hungry has purchased food. Reformed Church World Service has provided 500 mosquito nets to prevent malaria which is so endemic in this area. The local council of Churches, Eglise du Christ au Congo, is setting up support systems for people living with host families. CRWRC is committed to helping the survivors of this tragedy recover with dignity. At present, CRWRC has approved over \$20,000 (U.S.) to assist in the emergency phase of the recovery — with your assistance, we can do so much more.

News Digest

Romance defeats mugger

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, England (AP) — Romance and robbery proved a self-defeating combination for a British man who was sentenced recently to nine years in prison.

Mark Wharton, of Gateshead, England, was caught because he approached a woman at a bus stop shortly after committing a robbery and tried to make a date, prosecutors said. He wrote his name and telephone number on her hand, and she later made a permanent note.

Twelve days after the first robbery, Wharton used a knife to rob a man of a rucksack and jewelry. A video camera captured that mugging, and scenes were shown on a television crime program. The woman who had been asked for a date saw the show and called police, prosecutors said. Wharton was convicted on two counts of robbery.

Diary entry catches thief

STRATFORD, Ont. (CP) — A woman has learned that recording your crimes in a diary isn't a good idea. The 37-year-old's entry in her diary detailing plans to steal a vehicle backfired when Stratford police who came to her apartment saw the open book.

While investigating a report of a vehicle break-in in January, police followed fresh footprints in the snow to the woman's apartment, said Inspector John Hagarty. While the officers waited for the woman — who had been in her pajamas — to change, they noticed the open diary on the kitchen table.

"Guess I'll get ready to see what kind of car I can grab today," police quoted the entry as saying.

Overdose of donuts

LEXINGTON, Kentucky (Ananova) — A hotel in Kentucky which thought it had ordered five dozen donuts ended up with 5,000. A chef at the Four Points Sheraton in Lexington thought he'd asked for 60 donuts but thousands were delivered at 6 o'clock one recent morning.

The hotel and baker Joseph Mondelli have agreed to cover half of the cost each and have given the food to charity.

The baker's wife, Wilma, says she checked the order, because it was five times bigger than their previous largest. The bill came to \$1,300 (U.S.).